

LIMERICK

LITERARY

BY THE
FOSTER SISTERS

THE

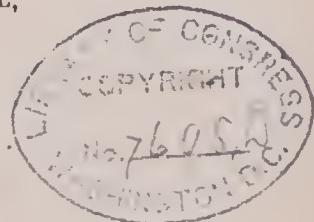
LIMERICK VETERAN;

OR,

THE FOSTER SISTERS.

BY AGNES M. STEWART

AUTHOR OF FLORENCE O'NEILL,



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THE
LIMERICK VETERAN;
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CHAPTER I.

PASSING AWAY.

DRAW aside the curtains, my faithful Jessy, so that the beams of the rising sun may stream into the room, and bring to me my unconscious babe that I may kiss and bless her ere I die."

"Dinna say sic a thing, my dear young leddy, wha could sic a puir body as me do wi the bonny bairn?"

"You will leave your home, Jessy, and take my child to my father's house in the Canongate," replied the dying woman, "and beseech him to show that mercy to my child which he denied to its mother."

"But his honour will bid me gang awa wi mony a hard word, sic as he gaid you, my leddy, when he drove you frae his door."

"Nevertheless, my dear Jessy, you will run the risk for love of me, and if he refuse to grant my dying prayer, then

convey my child to my late husband's aunt, Mrs. Lindsey, of Dundee, and beseech her to be a mother to my babe. You know where my little stock of gold is placed, Jessy; there is enough to pay your expenses and bring you back to your home."

The nurse moved across the room, and drawing aside a curtain revealed a scene of indescribable beauty. The cottage in which Margaret Lindsey had taken refuge when expelled from her father's house in Edinburgh, on account of her marriage with a penniless young Jacobite, was a shade above the class generally inhabited by persons in the position of her foster-mother, and on account of her former connection with the family of David Graham, she had many little comforts even for her use.

It was situated on the summit of a hill, overlooking a beautiful valley, the sides of which were clothed with hazels, the silvery birch, and gigantic oaks; yet higher other eminences arose, some dotted with purple heath, others bare and craggy, whilst in the distance towered the lofty mountains, veiled in the blue mist of early morning, which gradually melting away under the influence of the sun revealed them clearly as they stood forth in huge unwieldly masses filling up the background.

The silence of this picturesque spot was broken only by the babbling waters of a brook in the valley beneath, which, formed by the mountain torrent, wended its way through many a flowery maze till it reached the vale.

The belongings of the cottage or hut, for, notwithstanding what I have said, in English eyes it would be but little more in accordance with the wildness of the spot. The floor of the outer room was but of clay with the usual peat fire in the centre, but within were two rooms with boarded floors, and a very few articles of furniture of the plainest

kind; but the soft bed hung around with curtains, the whiteness of which was scarcely surpassed by the pallid face of the dying girl, and carefully arranged so as to screen her from the draughts, together with various necessary articles for domestic use, were to be seen in no other cottage in that wild spot.

Margaret was propped up by pillows, and ever and again a crimson stream rose to her lips as a hard cough shook her delicate frame; eagerly she peruses a letter her feeble hand has traced, to be delivered after her death to the person she has named; and then taking a miniature from a table beside her, representing herself in happier days, with the name of Margaret Graham engraved on the back, she secured it to a piece of ribbon, which she drew through a small gold ring set in the frame.

In a few moments the wail of an infant sounded in her ear, and Jessy reappeared, bearing in her arms the unconscious offspring of one too early wed, and whose eighteen brief years had comprised the several states of maid, wife, and widow.

A faint gleam of pleasure lighted up the wan countenance of the girl mother as she gazed on the infant whose short span of life numbered but three months, and she bade Jessy lay the child beside her.

Long she remained silently gazing on the child, who had fallen asleep, at first with that rapturous delight with which a mother regards her first born, then with a sentiment of the keenest sorrow, as she thought how, in the first days of its helpless infancy, it would be thrown wholly on the care of the simple but well-intentioned old nurse, at whose bosom, when under her father's roof, she had herself drawn the first nurture of infancy, and then followed a flood of tears at the remembrance that she was leaving her child thus forlorn and desolate.

Unfortunate Margaret, she had not a mother's fostering care in her own helpless childhood, and had grown up with none to teach her needful self-discipline and control. For a very few years of her short life, however, when her father suddenly awakened to the consciousness that the beautiful young girl whom he had consigned wholly to the care of Jessy McLaren, her nurse and foster-mother, even allowing her to dwell with her in her widowed home in Perthshire, was growing up wholly uneducated, the wealthy Edinburgh trader placed her in a boarding school, and then considered ho had done his duty by his motherless child, first for having allowed the old nurse to have the charge of his child so long, and then in sending her for five years to a boarding school, from which, when emancipated at the age of seventeen, well grafted in a few frivolous accomplishments, she was yet sadly devoid of all that was more substantial, her mind little better than a blank, and singularly unsuited to cope with the snares and dangers of the world at this most critical moment for her future well-being, he considered that he further discharged himself of his duties towards her by placing her under the control of a second wife, a young woman whom he had raised from the post of a domestic in his houschold to that of its mistress.

Margaret had not seen her father's second wife till her boarding school days were at an end. When she returned to her paternal home, it was to feel herself a stranger in every sense of the word. She was repulsed by the homeliness and vulgarity of the woman who had long oeeupied the place she had herself hoped to fill, whilst her father's neglect stung her to the quick. Her home was widely different from that which, in her early school days, she had loved to picture to herself, and sho soon realized the fact that her somewhat wild life in her foster-mother's cottage

was infinitely happier than that she was doomed to live in Edinburgh.

Her lovely face, however, soon won for her an offer of marriage, and as her stepmother had now a little girl, Margaret, who had ever been more or less an outcast from her father's home and his affections, was voted in the way, and arrangements for her marriage with a suitor well advanced in life pushed on with indecorous haste.

But young as she was, her will was as inflexible as that of her father. Her affections were already given to a young cavalier, by name, Robert Lindsey. Landless and almost penniless, he had yet ventured to raise his eyes to Margaret, and whilst yet her father's friend waged his suit with an obstinate pertinacity, dreading the finale which would inevitably ensue, fair Margaret gave her hand for better for worse to the gallant young soldier who, a few week later, was expected to join the forces of the Chevalier de St. George, at Preston, in Lancashire.

A very few weeks after this ill-starred union sufficed to show Margaret that she had reckoned without her host in supposing she would soften her father after she had boldly defied his authority, and she discovered her mistake in the way I shall narrate.

The father and daughter were one morning seated together, he busy with his account books, she at an embroidery frame, with her heart far away, and a tiny circlet of gold which she had far better not have possessed secreted in her bosom.

But time would not linger, though her resolution did. She had been for some months the wife of Lindsey; her father was pushing on the overtures of the rich corn-faetor, and she must tell the truth now or never.

I have forgotten to tell you that both by word and by letter, Lindsey had sought to obtain the consent of Graham

to his nuptials with his daughter, but had he been better off in this world's goods than he really was, he might as well have tried to draw water from a rock as to change the mind of David Graham when it was once made up.

Now he lays aside his ledger and prepares to descend into the counting-house, pausing for one moment, however, just as Margaret is about to summon courage to detain him, he said :

" My friend, Donald Miller, will be wi us again e'en, mak yourself as bonny as possible in the braw claithe I ha'e ordered for you."

" Father, dear father, I must speak to you, indeed, I must," said Margaret, starting up to intercept his progress to the door. " I cannot be the wife of Donald Miller."

" Hout na, you dour limmer, haud a care or you shall dree a sair weird ye are no bairn o' mine, suld ye refuse, I gie ye nae tosher if ye wed that papist gaberteen zie, Robert Lindsey."

" Oh, father, father, I *have* married him ; he *is* my husband," replied Margaret, throwing herself on her knees, and endeavoring to prevent him from leaving the room.

" Wha was that ye said ?" and David stood like one spell-bound as he asked the question.

" Dear father, forgive us both, I have married Robert," was the simple reply.

" Thin my ban rest upon ye, nane o' my gear will I gie ye, he is a Jacobite and a gaberlemzee to boot, I winna set een on ye agin, I charge ye leave me for him whom you have taen."

As David Graham spoke these words he wrenched himself from the grasp of his child ; she fell on the ground in a heavy swoon, but on her recovery she hastened to her room, packed up the few things she possessed, together

with a not inconsiderable sum in money which, given to her for her own use, she had carefully economized, and with a heart smarting under the injustice of her father, forgetting that if *he* had no right to command her to marry against her will, he *had* a right at her inexperienced age to forbid her marriage with a mere soldier of fortune like Lindsey, she departed on a journey to her foster-mother's home in Perthshire, having first posted a letter to her husband.

Late one evening after Jessy had retired to rest, she was awakened by a knocking at the door of her cottage.

When fully aroused, she left her bed and, without opening the door, called from within :

" Wha makes sic a din at a puir body's door at this time o' necht ? "

" Jessy, Jessy, for the love of God, open to your foster-child," was the reply, followed by a long wailing cry.

" Whisht, now, and is it my bonny leddy ? " said the old woman, as hastily opening the door she beheld Margaret shivering without. Pale, exhausted, and feeble, she staggered within the cottage, and exclaiming : " Oh, my foster-mother, I have traveled all this way to feel your loving arms around me," she fell senseless on the floor.

After using a few simple restoratives, the good Jessy succeeded in restoring her to consciousness ; then, when she had fairly revived, she hastily threw on a few clothes, and speedily returning she said, while making preparations for refreshment for Margaret :

" I am unco glad that I ha'e still some o' the guude wine my bairn sent me from Auld Reekie ; I ha'e part o' a muir cock, too, and eggs, and white bread ; and whiles you eat, I winna let you talk."

Then Jessy exerted herself to perform all the duties of a hospitable hostess, and with no small pleasure beheld Mar-

garet make a good meal, though before it was over the lat-
ter had insisted on telling her of her expulsion from her
father's home.

She had not dwelt at Jessy's cottage more than a couple
of months when the news of her husband's death reached
her. Under the pressure of grief and anxiety, her health
visibly declined, and after the birth of her child the efforts
of the village Esculapius, who, from the first, had avowed
his belief that the young lady had but a short time to live,
were of no avail.

To return from my long digression. Margaret had
remained some time buried in her sad thoughts after Jessy
had, as she had requested, laid the child beside her, when
suddenly she called her to her bedside.

"Could you try again to bring to me the priest, dear
nurse, whom I used to see before I went to Edinburgh?"

"I ken nae where he may be found, my bairn; these are
sair times for priests; awhiles he hides amang the moun-
tains, and gladsome are we whin we see him, but I ken
nothing of him noo."

"Listen to me, Jessy. See my babe baptized in the
faith I first learned from your lips, and let her bear my
name. This letter you will give to Mrs. Lindsey should my
father refuse to see my child, and be careful to hang my
miniature around her neck before you resign her to the care
of others. And now, good nurse and foster-mother, let me
lay my head upon your bosom, for I am faint even unto
death."

Not without many pauses and much difficulty had Mar-
garet spoken thus, and Jessy was alarmed at beholding a
sudden change pass over her features.

For a few moments she reclined in the arms of her nurse,
gasping for breath, Jessy's tears falling in torrents down

her rugged countenance as she gently wiped the heavy dews from Margaret's face. She had hoped against hope, and it was only now when her foster-daughter lay in the arms of death that she became aware the last moment was drawing nigh.

The consolation, however, for which Margaret's heart had yearned was not denied her. The aged priest, who occasionally brought the ministrations of religion by stealth to those dwellers amidst the mountains who yet kept true to the Catholic faith, had that morning turned his steps to the valley in which Jessy's cottage stood, wishful to see if she were still there.

The door of the hut stood open, but no one was visible, but from an inner room he heard sounds of grief mingled with the moans of one in mortal anguish.

Very gently, on hearing the strange footfall without, did Jessy remove the arm which had supported the dying girl, and hastened to see who was the intruder.

"Gude guide us, and is it you, Father Luthbert," said she, "come in to my puir bairn, the sweet winsome young leddy; it is nearly all over wi her."

A flash of joy illumined poor Margaret's features as the aged priest approached her bed. The faults she had committed were occasioned by her indiscreet bringing up, but her heart had yearned for other words than those of poor simple Jessy.

Broken sentences gasped out painfully, and whatever had troubled the conscience of the dying girl burthened it no longer. The Bread of Life, too, was hers, brought, as it were, miraculously to strengthen her spirit in its flight, yet when all should have been calmness and praise, a sudden thought disturbed her. She could not speak, but by a sign she made Jessy understand that her care was for her child.

A little water from the brook without, when her foster-mother made known to the priest that the babe was unbaptized, was brought hastily in, and by the side of the dying mother the sacred rite of baptism was administered and the child christened by the name of Margaret.

A smile of unspeakable delight had flitted over its mother's face as Jessy received the infant in her arms when the ceremony was over. Then the priest again turned to speak words of hope and consolation to the mother, but her spirit had already passed to a better world.



CHAPTER II.

THE MARRIAGE AT THE HOTEL DE BRETEUL.

 OFTLY steals the sunlight through the stained windows of an elegant apartment in the Hotel de Breteul. The buzz of many voices of persons assembled in the adjoining room strikes upon the ear, but those of whom I am going to speak to you have stolen away from the busy throng for a quiet half hour to themselves.

The elder of the party is a lady of some forty-five years old. Her features are still beautiful; she was brilliant in her youth, and she is a lovely woman still.

Beside her stands a youth and a maiden. Each are in the spring-time of life. The features of the young man strikingly resemble those of the elder lady, with, perhaps, the only difference being that his are masculine; but the arched eyebrows, lustrous violet blue eyes, the somewhat haughty curve of the short upper lip, the small, smooth and straight nose, are strikingly alike in both.

The maiden has not passed the years of girlhood, and her clean, dark complexion, black eyes, and raven tresses, have won for her the reputation of a beauty.

But a deep sigh escapes the girl, and two large tears fell on the hand of the elder lady which she holds within her own.

"Nay, Cecile; what, in tears at the very thought that Walter has shortly to leave us," said she; "remember, my child, that you are about to become the bride of a soldier, and should rather rejoice that he is soon to draw his maiden sword from its scabbard. You must take courage, and like the wife of a true soldier, yourself gird on your husband's sword for the battle."

The girl visibly shuddered as the lady spoke :

" Tell me, Walter, that you will not leave me for at least a month after our nuptials ; tell me this, and I will try and be at rest."

" My beloved Cecile," replied the young man, " do you not know that the king is expected here hourly, and that, perhaps, even in two short days I may have to accompany my father to Scotland ? "

" So soon, so soon, I could scarcely believe them when I heard them say that preparations were already being made for a descent into Scotland."

" Cheer up, my dear Cecile, Walter will come back to you, rest assured, and when next he leaves you, you will be more courageous."

" Fill my heart with somewhat of your own courage, dear madam. I have heard you suffered much in your youth, and bore your trials bravely."

" A captive in the court of Queen Mary, Cecile, threatened with a union my very soul abhorred, I was for a long while ignorant whether one whom I truly loved and to whom I was betrothed was living or dead. I am a prey to natural fear full often, but proud to be the wife of one who draws his sword in a rightful cause. Loving both ardently, I see my husband and my son go forth to the field ; all that renders life dear to me would be lost in losing them."

" Courageous descendant of the O'Neills, dear Lady St. John," said Cecile, forcing back her tears, " I will try to learn courage and heroism of you."

" And when our king has his own again, Cecile," said Walter, " you will rejoice in the thought that my good right arm has struck a blow in his cause ; but let us return to the salon, it will not be well for us to be missed for long."

The Baron de Breutel's Mansion was the resort of all the ardent and disaffected spirits that were averse to the Hanoverian rule, and as the time fixed for the marriage of the son of the Marshal and Lady St. John with the daughter of an old friend happened to coincide with that of the rising in November, 1715, in favor of the claims of the Chevalier St. George, the Hotel de Breteul was thronged with company.

When the three re-entered the salon, they beheld amongst the gay group forming, indeed, its centre, a handsome young man apparently about six and twenty years of age. He wore the dress of a French Abbé, but every one present knew him to be the son of the late king, James the Second. As now, so it was at the time of which I write, and will be till the end of the world, if monarchy endures so long, each fair dame and maiden in the salon pushed forward, anxious to a get a word or even a smile from the scion of an ill-fated race, whom the English Court and its upholders termed the Pretender. Perhaps this chivalrous feeling too was born out of the very misfortunes of the House of Stuart, which for so many centuries had given sovereigns either to England or Scotland. Any way, happy were the maids and matrons that night, whatever their country, and the loyal Irish who had fought and bled at Limerick, and English, Scotch, and French alike were there, who eagerly treasured up every word that fell from the lips of the Chevalier.

Nor were the two or three gentlemen who alone accompanied him in his hasty and private visit to his friends forgotten. Unfortunately for the Chevalier, the bright eyes of a young kinswoman of the Baron's attracted the attention of Lord Keith, one of the Prince's gentlemen in waiting. A sore thing it must be to the self-love and vanity of woman when supereeded by another of her sex, supposing she has

given away her heart before she dreamed it was no longer in her keeping.

Adele de Breteul was still unmarried ; her heart, her hand, her large fortune, might have been Lord Keith's for the asking ; if she lacked the freshness of eighteen, she possessed what is more worthy of admiration in the minds of many, namely, the matured charms of twenty-four ; what she had lost of the simplicity of early youth she had gained in the self-possession and grace of womanhood ; and yet she beheld herself put aside for "a miss in her teens," a mere visitor in her brother's house ; she monopolized the attentions of Lord Keith, and as plainly as she dared she let Mademoiselle de Breteul know that she gloried in the conquest she had made.

Vainly had Emilie endeavored to lure away Lord Keith from that silly prattler ; her stratagems were useless ; he had no eyes, no ears for any one but Angelique. Not only had Emilie felt keenly the overtures for marriage made to her niece by Walter St. John, simply because she was herself unmarried, but she was to feel the pangs of jealousy as well, and she stole away to an adjoining apartment to give free vent to her emotion, lest she should betray herself before others.

"To be set aside for *her*, a vapid, silly girl, with no attraction but her doll-like face ; had she my own intelligence or wit, I might have borne that another should compete with myself ; she sees too what I suffer, and glories in my mortification."

Emilie had wandered away far from the gay company and the brilliantly-lighted salon ; she had seen the King retire with two of his companions to the Baron's cabinet, and had observed that Lord Keith had lingered behind in conversation with Angelique ere, maddened with jealousy and anger, she had sought her present solitude.

It was early winter, but the apartment to which she had turned her steps was faint with the fragrance of a profusion of rare exotics. Her rage had subsided into a determination to revenge herself in some way which should effectually separate her detested young relation from the object of her misplaced affection, and leaning against the basin of a fountain, her fingers relentlessly destroyed a fair magnolia, the leaves of which she stripped and cast them into the clear waters beneath. She was unconscious of her exterior actions, but her mind was busy enough as to how she should work out her revenge.

"I do not want to injure the Chevalier," she said to herself, "but even this must be, even *he* must be sacrificed rather than that odious girl shall become Lady Keith, or that *he* should triumph; for, alas, I fear my very self-respect has abandoned me, and that I have betrayed a secret which I ought to have guarded as jealously as my honor itself. I shall put a stop to any previous offer of marriage my lord may choose to make my precious cousin by at once hastening to the embassy. The Earl of Stair will put a stop to this proposed trip to Scotland."

A little later a female, clad in a dark mantle and closely veiled, passed through the back entrancé of the mansion used only by the domestics of the household. The confusion within, caused by the influx of visitors, favored both her departure and return. Those who saw her pass swiftly by believed her to be one of the female servants of the establishment, despatched on an errand, little thinking that it was the sister of the loyal Baron de Breteul on her way to betray the prinee, then a guest beneath his roof, into the hands of his enemies.

It was very late at night when Emilie arrived at the Hotel of the English Embassy. She requested to be introduced without delay to the Earl of Stair.

"His lordship could be seen in the morning; this is a very late hour," was the reply to her hasty demand.

"My business with the Earl admits of no delay," she said, with a haughty gesture; "I must see him at once." Then suddenly remembering that her disguise, coupled with the lateness of the hour, and she alone, and on foot, might of itself tend to make the man refuse compliance with her request, she adopted the safe plan of slipping a twenty franc piece into his hand, in doing which she displayed a costly diamond ring on one of her fingers.

The bribe had the desired effect. The next moment she was in the private apartment of one of the Chevalier's greatest enemies, the Earl of Stair.

Her manner was impetuous and hurried.

"Persons attached to the British Embassy have for some days been on the watch to apprehend the Chevalier de St. George. I am correct, am I not? You have demanded in the name of your sovereign, King George, that he shall not be allowed to pass through France?"

"Exactly so, and to what may this preamble tend, my unknown informant?"

The Earl's question was parried with another. Instead of his receiving a direct reply to his own, probably the lady wished to satisfy him that she knew as much, or more, of the movements of the unfortunate Chevalier than he did himself.

"And as the regent to whom you have addressed yourself, my lord, has failed in having him arrested and re-conducted to Lorraine, you have yourself sent your men out in all directions, but he is so well disguised that hitherto all your efforts have failed, have they not, my lord?"

Lord Stair gave vent to an angry exclamation.

"Who are you, madam," he said, "and with what inten-

tion have you addressed yourself to me? If you can make me cognizant of the movements of the Pretender, I pray you, speak out. At present, all you have said has made me aware that you know as much as I do myself; hence, I assume that you know much more if you choose to disclose it."

"The Chevalier de St. George is in Paris. He sets out to-morrow for Chateau Thierry on his way to Bretagne, and he will change horses at the village of Normancourt."

The Earl listened with unqualified amazement.

"Accept my best thanks for your information, madam. I beg the honor of being made acquainted with your name."

"I have fulfilled my errand, Lord Stair, and choose to preserve my incognito."

As Emilie spoke thus she slightly bowed, hurried from the room, descended the staircase, and a few moments later threaded, with a rapid step, the spacious streets which lay between the British Embassy and her brother's mansion.

She had been absent exactly an hour from the gay assembly in the salon. She re-entered her own chamber unnoticed by any one, and speedily arrayed herself in the costly robe she had laid aside ere she started on her cruel mission, and she was startled at the ghastly reflection of her face presented to her by her mirror. After a moment's thought, she said to herself:

"It is well. I can plead illness as the cause of my absence. My disordered looks will bear me out, even if I do not send a message to my mother to say that I am ill, which, perhaps, would be the better course."

Thus she stood for a few moments hesitating, till the reflection of her own handsome face, ill though she looked, turned her thoughts in another direction, and her eyes flashed with indignation at the thought of the persons, to

separate whom she had committed so dire a wrong on the Chevalier.

"No, no," she said, "I must return to the salon, if it be only to have the gratification of seeing him, and remembering what his probable penalty will be for being in the Chevalier's company. And she, poor, miserable thing, for whom he coolly put me aside, I shall, at least, have the satisfaction of knowing I have made her suffer."

With a weary step, for Emilie's temper and the evil dispositions of her heart had not been raised without her frame bearing evidence of the storm of passionate fury which had swept over soul, beneath the influence of which she could have crushed under foot every tie, however sacred, she now returned to the salon from which she had so long been absent. Her departure had attracted the attention of her own immediate family, also of Angelique.

To all inquiries she had but one reply, and her pale face corroborated the apparent truthfulness of the assertion, that she was ill.

"I felt very ill, and retired to my own room. I feel better now," she added, and a flash of triumph lighted up her eye as she gazed around the room in search of Angelique and Lord Keith, whom she at length discerned seemingly wholly absorbed in each other.

Jealousy and hatred again filled her heart. With the generality of impulsive and hasty dispositions, she had not the art of imposing a constraint upon her feelings, and suddenly breaking from the little throng, including her niece and others, who expressed sorrow at her indisposition, she swept hastily on to the spot in which Lord Keith and Angelique were keeping up an animated conversation.

A bright red spot glowed on her cheek, and it was with difficulty she commanded her voice, as she exclaimed :

"Why, my Lord Keith, are you turning traitor to your king, toying still with my child cousin, and forgetting your liege lord?"

"No, madam," said Keith, with a low bow, "I can pay my homage at the shrine of youth and beauty, and still be a faithful servant to my Prince."

"Well, well, we will hope so," said Emilie, still striving to keep up the tone of badinage with which she addressed him; "but remember, if any harm should befall King James during his journey, I for one can attest that the incomparable Lord Keith was exchanging honeyed words with girls fresh from the school-room, instead of helping his master with his advice."

As Emilie spoke these words, she glided hastily away, leaving the nobleman in a state of unenviable perplexity. Pleased with the *naiveté* of Angelique, he had, it is true, fooled away in her company some two or three hours, when it would have better become him to have made one of the small council assembled with the Prince in the Baron's Cabinet; whilst Angelique, with the ineconsiderate vanity and self-conceit of a very young girl, felt no small pleasure at the consciousness she possessed that she had made a conquest of the English nobleman, and had caused mortification to her cousin. Fully alive though, at the same time, to the knowledge that Emilie had sufficient influence in her family to be the means of expelling herself for the future, as she was merely a visitor at the house of the Baron.

Lord Keith gazed for a moment after the retreating form of Emilie. Lost in thought, he knew not why, for the idea of treachery in the family of a de Breteul never for a moment entered his mind; yet he felt annoyed and vexed with himself that he had allowed the serious business that had brought him thither that evening to be driven from his

mind by the fascination of a pair of bright eyes and a pretty face.

Angelique too was disquieted. With the heedless conceit so common to her age, she was delighted at the thought that she possessed an influence over Lord Keith, and pleased to see Emilie provoked. But the evident discomposure of the former awakened her fears, and she resolved to try and propitiate Emilie on the first opportunity.

Suddenly Keith recovered himself, and saying: "I have, perhaps, tarried too long, so I bid you adieu, fair Angelique. I will to the king without further delay," he hurried from the salon.



CHAPTER III.

THE ESPOUSALS.



HE dawn of another day had clearly broken over the city of Paris ere the Chevalier had ended his long conference with the Baron and the few councillors who had attended him. From the hotel he repaired straightway to Chaillot, whither he was anxiously expected by the queen-mother, and it was pre-arranged that when he should leave her twenty-four hours later one of the Baron's own carriages should be in waiting, with attendants, wearing the livery of the latter, to conduct him on his way to Chateau Thierry.

The excitement, consequent on the arrival and departure of the Chevalier at an end, the next day was devoted to festive preparations for the marriage of the Baron's daughter with the son of the Marshal and Lady St. John, which was to take place on the following morning at the church of Notre Dame, in presence of a large concourse of titled and influential personages, comprising many of the old noblesse, friends, or relations of the Baron de Breteul, as also several of the Jacobite families still resident at St. Germain, and last, though not least, by that of the queen-mother, who for this day left her retirement at Chaillot to witness the espousals of the son of one whom she had loved so dearly as the Lady St. John.

The bridal robe of Cecile de Bretuel was of cloth of silver, her veil of Brussels lace was bound with a bandeau of diamonds, intermixed with orange blossoms, and her train was borne by the young girls, the power of whose charms, combined with a degree of foolish pleasure, all

giving rise to jealous emotions in the breast of Emilie, had caused, in its result, a deadly act of mischief.

The bridegroom inherited the handsome features of his parents, but his handsome and well-formed head was disfigured by the full-bottomed periwig of the period. He was attired in black velvet, banded with pearls and with rigolettes of the same.

Then, in the splendid salons of the de Bretuel palace, great festivities were held to celebrate the marriage, but under all the outward show of gaiety and pomp there was a feeling of anxiety on the part of the Baron and his friends as to the success of the Chevalier's descent into Scotland, the plotting and mischievous Emilie being the only exception.



CHAPTER IV.

THE POST-HOUSE AT NORMANCOURT.

N a misty morning in November, 1715, the Chevalier de St. George, after bidding a sorrowful farewell to the queen-mother, started on his way to Chateau Thierry, his men, as I have already said, wearing the Baron's liveries.

The last tie that bound the queen-mother to the world, he had parted from her with much sorrow and depression.

A drizzling rain was falling, and it was scarce daybreak when he quitted Paris, but long ere he reached Norman-court it had ceased and given way to a fog or mist through which the Chevalier could but dimly discern the cottages of the peasantry as he emerged into the open country, little dreaming danger was so near, in spite of the caution which had accompanied his movements since he left Lorraine.

He had gradually shaken off the depression attendant on the parting with his mother, and was cheerfully conversing with his companions when, to his unspeakable alarm, the vehicle suddenly stopped, and the next moment he heard a female voice begging the driver not to proceed.

His momentary fear was now changed to surprise as a woman of not unpleasing countenance, dressed in the garb of a well-to-do person of the humbler class, placing her foot on the step of the carriage, thus addressed him : “If it be true that you are the King of England, I warn you not to go to the post-house. You will be lost if you do, for several villains are waiting there to murder you.”*

The unfortunate Chevalier was gifted with great presence of mind, and without betraying the emotion he felt, he said :

* Strickland's Lives, &c.

"Tell me your name, my good woman, as also how you became possessed of such information as this?"

"My name is L'Hopital; I am a single woman and the mistress of the post-house at Normancourt, which I beg you not to go near; three Englishmen are still there drinking," she continued, "whose conversation I have listened to; they are arranging with some desperate characters living in this neighborhood as to how they mean to set upon and waylay a traveler who was to change horses at Normancourt on his way to Chateau Thierry. If you are the King, are you not expected there on your way to England?"

For a moment the Chevalier faltered. Such words as those which fell from this honest woman's lips were indeed enough to dismay the stoutest heart, with the knowledge previously that his fierce enemy, Lord Stair, had his spies abroad, and that the British Government had set a price of £100,000 upon his head.

His hesitation lasted but a moment. The good woman's manner was too earnest for him to doubt *her*.

"I am indeed he whom you seek," he replied, regardless of the warning glances of Keith and his friend William Erskine, both of whom lacked the Chevalier's reliance on the woman's sincerity, "and considering in your truth, I will at once return to Paris."

"There is no need to take such a step," she replied. "I have given the villains such an abundance of wine and spirituous liquors that they are thoroughly intoxicated; then I locked them in the room, satisfied that for the present they are too drunk to do any harm, and then stole out to apprise you of the danger you are in, and if you feel that you can confide in my good intentions, I will at once take you to the house of our good Curé, where you will be perfectly safe."

Lord Keith played nervously with the hilt of his sword

as the good woman spoke. His apprehensions of two nights since were revived ; again the words of Emilie, unmeaning but for the flash of her eye and the evident useless attempt to suppress her indignation at his foolish flirtation with her cousin, rushed to his remembrance, and he inwardly cursed the hour when, by his own imprudence, he felt he was perhaps the means of having drawn the Chevalier into danger. He had seen enough during his visit at the Hotel to know that the sister of its lord was a woman to be feared if offended. With the unsuspecting frankness of his race, the Chevalier at once said :

" My best thanks are due to you, my good woman. I and my attendants will follow wherever you may lead us ; " and descending from the carriage, he accompanied the worthy woman down a lane and across a somewhat unfrequented field, which led by a circuitous route to the village church of Normancourt.

It was an unpretending little building, and beside it stood the cottage of the Curé, a man well stricken in years, whose calm, placid countenance bespoke a well-spent life. Monsieur le Curé was in fact the idol of his people, and one of the foremost amongst his parishioners in helping him in every good work he knew to be the honest woman who now entered the garden leading to his house, accompanied by two gentlemen.

" Monsieur le Curé," she said, dropping a curtsey as the venerable pastor came forward to meet her, " I bring you no less a person than the King of England, whom some persons are lying in wait for at my house to waylay and murder."

The Curé's calm countenance was at once lighted up with an expression of delight.

" Ah, Monsieur le Prince, accept the hospitality of my

house, I pray you, till we can concert means to ensure your safety," he said, leading the way to his own apartment, proud and happy to have it in his power to yield a shelter to the Chevalier, whom he immediately recognized as having met at Chaillot when on a visit to the queen-mother. Then, after lending an attentive ear to his worthy friend Madame L'Hopital, he advised her to proceed at once to the magistrate, Monsieur D'Argenson, and beg of him to accompany her, with two or three gensd'armes, and take the men at the post-house into custody.

Winter though it was, the worthy woman hastened with such speed to the abode of the magistrate that drops of perspiration stood on her comely face, and she was so out of breath that it was some time before she could make known her errand.

The magistrate, to whom she was well known, was even then hearing several cases, but as she was a person of some importance in the village and universally respected, the man to whom she spoke took her at once to D'Argenson.

It was with some difficulty, however, that he could be made to comprehend what was really the matter, so extreme was the agitation of the generally calm post-mistress; but when he at length thoroughly understood her errand, he rose hastily, dismissed the cases that were being tried till the following day, and summoning half a dozen well armed men, complimenting Madame meanwhile for her courage and discretion, he proceeded at once to the post-house.

Her heart beating with joy at the success of her stratagem, Madame took the key of the room out of her pocket. The three Englishmen whom she had locked up were still sleeping off the effects of the liquor with which she had so well plied them; the fourth of the party proved to be a baron well known to D'Argenson as a villainous spy in the employment of crafty Lord Stair.

With some little difficulty the Englishmen were aroused; at first they stared with a sort of half-topsy defiant look at the gensd'armes; then, as they gradually recovered themselves and were made to understand the charge Madame preferred against them, they produced Lord Stair's passports.

He who was evidently the superior of the party proved to be Colonel Douglas, son of Sir William Douglas, an *attaché* of the Embassy, who, with an air of great bravado, boldly confronted and attempted to prevent D'Argenson from the exercise of his duty.

"I will not be interfered with," said he, assuming a menacing attitude. "Understand, I and my companions are doing our duty. We are all engaged in the service of the British Ambassador."

D'Argenson surveyed the doughty colonel with a look of unqualified contempt.

"Put up your sword, sir," said he. "You and your companions are all my prisoners. No ambassador would dare to avow such villainous actions as that in which you have been engaged to-day. Officers," he added, "take these persons into custody. I commit them for trial."

Gnashing his teeth with rage, the little red-faced colonel, scarce yet quite sober, shook his fist in the direction of the inner room to which he imagined Madame had withdrawn, and inwardly cursed the folly which had led him, by indulging too freely in the use of the bottle, to speak aloud of the business in which he was engaged.

"Eleven o'clock," he said to himself, as with a furious gesture he followed his companions under the escort of the gensd'armes. "Two hours since he must have arrived at Normancourt. *One hundred thousand pounds* at stake, and lost by a babbling tongue and a wine bottle."

Swelling with impotent rage, the whole party were after a time duly consigned to prison, after which the clear-headed magistrate penned a letter to Lord Stair, acquainting that discomfited personage with the event of the morning, and carefully avowing his belief that his Excellency was in no way aware of the attempt about to be made on the persons of undefended travelers.

Meanwhile Madame had hastened to dispatch one of her couriers to Chateau Thierry with a true statement of what had occurred; then, having provided herself with a dress which she procured from a friend in the village, she hastened to the house of the Curé.

The calm countenance of the Chevalier betrayed no trace of the feelings which were working within his soul. His first act was one of thanksgiving to God for his miraculous escape; his next a return of heartfelt thanks to the worthy soul to whom, under God, he owed his preservation.

Panting and breathless, Madame had thrown herself on the chair the Curé had placed for her, and pressing one hand on her heart she produced with the other from beneath the folds of her large cloak the disguise she had brought with her for the Chevalier.

"The villains are all in prison, Monsieur le Curé," she said, "and I have here a dress for the King, should he like another disguise. Hark! let him lose no time. There are the wheels of one of my own voitures; a fresh relay of horses will be ready for him when he is some way on his journey."

As the good woman spoke, a smart-looking voiture rumbled up to the garden gate, and the Chevalier, who, not having been seen by any one leaving, thought it a loss of time to alter his present disguise, would have again paused to reiterate his thanks to his preserver and the good Curé,

but the latter urged his departure, bidding him remember that danger might yet lurk in his path, and recommending himself warmly to the prayers of his whilom venerable friend, the persecuted, proscribed heir of three kingdoms entered Madame's voiture, accompanied by his two attendants, and reaching Nantes in safety, found a vessel in readiness to convey him to St. Malo.

Meanwhile Lord Stair's indignation knew no bounds at the failure of his villainous scheme, which he attributed solely to the strong drinks of which he found Colonel Douglas and his men had taken such large potations.

D'Argenson, partly in a spirit of mischief, had exposed both them and the villainous La Motte, and was eloquent in praise of the excellent Madame L'Hopital, whose energy and discretion, he said, had alone averted a dreadful catastrophe.

"My evil stars are against me," said the Earl to Sir William Douglas, to whom he had narrated, as clearly as his gust of passion would allow, the failure of the undertaking of his son. "The Regent plays us false; for when I demanded, in the name of King George, that the Pretender should not be allowed to pass through France, he replied 'he would have him taken back to Lorraine, if I could tell him where he was, but that *he* was not to be obliged to be spy or gaoler for King George.' Then he sent for the Major of the Guard, and before my face told him to intercept the Pretender on the road. The fellow gave me a long account of his zeal in my service, but at heart I believe him to be not well pleased with his office, and that the Regent himself has no real desire to detain the Pretender. Every effort of those I have employed has proved ineffectual to track out his whereabouts. And when at last a lady in the enemy's own camp tells me where he may be found, I am

balked of my prey by such an egregious misadventure as this."

The suspicion of Lord Stair that the Regent was well disposed to facilitate the escape of the Chevalier was quite correct. The latter gladdened the honest heart of Madame L'Hopital by sending her a little later his own portrait as a testimonial for her services, but political reasons prevented him from publishing the depositions of the post-mistress and her servants.



CHAPTER V.

TURNED ADRIFT.

DUIR bairn ! puir bairn !" said a woman to herself, as she threaded with weary steps the high street of Edinburgh, " wha sall I do wi ye if the old earle will not see your winsome face ? " Then, suddenly pausing before the door of a large house, she rang the bell with a trembling hand, and pulling her cloak on one side, pressed her lips on the brow of a baby a few months old, which lay nestled in her bosom.

The summons was answered by a maid, who started with surprise at what she imagined must be the wraith of Jessy McLaren, whose pale face was just distinguishable from beneath her hood.

" Eh ! lack a day, Effie ! lack a day ! here's a change o' markets. I hae come frae my ain mountain hame, and must see the gudeman at once."

" And wha's bairn is that, Jessy ? " said the girl, still holding the door in her hand, as if uncertain whether to give admission or not.

" Eh, lack a day ! it is puir Miss Margaret's bairn. She fell unco sick, Effie, and whin sh'e waur about to die, wi mony tears in her bonny blue e'en, she begged me sair to carry her wee bairn to Auld Reekie."

" His honor winna care to see the puir bit lassie," was the reply. " I dare na tak ye to him, Jessy."

" Then I'll gang to him by mysell, lassie. Hout na ! I ken his biding place," and somewhat wrathfully poor Jessy pulled up the folds of her old grey cloak and hurried through the hall to the room in which she knew her old master generally sat.

Her timorous knock at the door was answered by a gruff "Come in," and with her heart beating wildly, the old woman gently opened the door and entered the room.

Coming as she did out of the mist and darkness of a winter evening, the strong light of several wax candles which burned upon the table for a moment dazzled her eyes, whilst the warmth of the room turned the cold and weary woman faint. She speedily recovered, however, and without noticing the exclamation of surprise at the unwarrantable intrusion of an old beggar woman, for such at the first glance Graham and his wife believed her to be, she walked quickly up to the former, and without any preamble, she pulled aside the plaid which covered the face of the sleeping infant.

"I ha'e brought a puir bit lassie to your honor," said Jessy, with a low curtsey. "The wee thing is the bairn o' your ain chield, bonny Miss Margaret that was. Hech, sir—"

"Woman, what brings you here? Begone, and take back the chield to its mither."

"To its mither did your honor say? Alack! sir, the puir bairn ha'e *nae* mither. I ha'e brought it frae my mountain hame. Whisht! whisht!" she said, trying to soothe the infant, who, awaking, began to make itself heard. "'Tak her to my father, Jessy, when I am dead,' said the winsome young leddy, 'and ask him to be kind to my chield,' and sae as soon as I had streekit her out and laid her in her grave I lift my ain bit cottage for Auld Reekie to bring your honor the bairn."

"Gang awa, woman. I ha'e nothing to do with the bairn o' Robert Lindsey and my fause chield;" and David Graham turned with aversion from the unconscious infant.

"Hech, sir, you ha'e muckle siller and gowd; winna you help the puir bairn?"

"Woman!" roared the furious man, "gang awa frae my sight."

"Whisht, my bairn, and dinna let me murmur at my cross. I'll shake the dust frae your door stains off my feet, David Graham, and lang and sair and dree'd penance will ye do for the sin o' this nicht. 'Tis a fearsome thing, mon, to drive out a puir auld body and a wee bairn, a chield o' your ain aye might a'most say, on sic a nicht."

As Jessy uttered these words she pressed the child to her bosom and hurried from the room. As she strode through the hall with the dignity of a queen, Effie, whose ear had been applied to the keyhole of the parlor door, caught her by the arm and whispered—

"Jessy, gudewife, tell me where are ye ganging?"

"I canna say, Effie. The winsome bairn maun be cared for, and the wicked auld carle will ha'e nane o' her. I maun bide in Auld Reekie the nicht, and i' the morrow's dawn I maun flit on my way to bonny Dundee. The bairn's father's aunt forbye may help me wi the child."

"Here is siller for you, Jessy, for sake o' auld lang syne, and do you go to the neighboring Close, off the Canon-gate, you ken where my sister the hosier's wife lives; say to her: 'Effie Craig will be unco glad if you will gie an auld cummer a bed and a mouth fu o' food the nicht.'"

"The thanks o' a puir body be wi you, lassie; and if ever ye come so far north, dinna forget thy auld kimmer Jessy bide among the Highlands o' Perthshire."

CHAPTER VI.

THE HUT IN THE GLEN.



HE short winter afternoon was wearing away. Though the day had been bright and clear, the weather was severely cold, and the dull sough of the wind as it swept in hollow gusts over the uplands seemed to sing a requiem over the blighted hopes of the Highlanders, who, after taking a sorrowful leave of their friends in Perth, crossed the frozen waters of the Tay and continued their march to Montrose.*

It was the day before the flight of the unfortunate Chevalier from that ancient land he had so much wished to behold. The battle of Sheriffmuir had been fought, his army had been defeated and surrendered at Preston, and news had arrived that the Duke of Argyll was in full march to give them battle. That dull torpor which is the result of disappointed hopes had fallen on the small band of ardent and enthusiastic men who had raised the standard of the Chevalier, and who, in proportion as the chances of success seemed more fearfully against them, their number being small as well as undisciplined, thirsted to be led once more against the enemy. But the defeat at Preston, and the long list of executions which were sure to follow, and which brought to the block, or to banishment, or poverty, many a noble victim in the year 1517, had taught a lesson of prudence to those who were the leaders, and now, in the quiet evening hour, with the clear, cold rays of the moon lighting up the purple mountains in the distance, four gentlemen, attended by one faithful servant walking a little in the rear,

* Jefer's History of the Pretenders.

have wandered, and are holding secret converse as to future plans and safety for the time being.

Foremost of the group is the Chevalier himself. His usually pale countenance may this night vie with the sickly pallor of the moon above his head. His eyes are clear, dark, and penetrating, and his tall figure a little bent as he inclines forward to catch more clearly the words that fall from the lips of his faithful friend, Marshal St. John, who walks by his right side.

The Marshal is now a middle-aged man, erect as a dart, his hair just a little gray, his eye as bright as when in his youthful days he wooed the Lady Florence. On his person he bears many a scar, and his left arm is even now in a sling from a gunshot wound at Sheriffmuir.

Beside the Marshal walks a young man but newly wedded, whom I introduced to you at the Hotel de Bretuel, and his girl-wife is passing the early days of her wedded life in the old chateau at St. Germains.

Lord Mar makes up the fourth of the party, the nobleman who had led the Prince's troops at the battle of Sheriffmuir, and who had the good fortune to succeed in making good his retreat to France, and by so doing saving his head.

"Let me entreat your Highness to embark in the French vessel which is now lying in the harbor. What if your enemies seize upon your person?"

"I cannot think of such a step," was the reply. "I will not accede to such a proposal."

"Allow me to explain," said Lord Mar; "that if you insist on remaining amongst the remnant of your troops their danger will be increased tenfold, as also your own."

"At present the men can retreat amongst the mountains," observed St. John, "and their own safety will thus be secured; but if his Highness be with them, the loyalty and

affection of his devoted followers, and their anxiety to ensure his safety, will assuredly prevent them from being careful of themselves."

Then there was a few moments silence; it was broken by the Chevalier himself, who said in a voice tremulous from emotion:

"And these, gentlemen, are really the conscientious opinions you have formed. My fate is in your hands, be it so, I shall feel much my return to France with another enterprise unsuccessful. But you, my brave friends, would never counsel an ignominious flight, and it shall never be told to posterity that James the Third staid amidst his loyal and devoted people to become their ruin."

"We have counselled your Highness to the best of our power," said the Earl of Mar and St. John both in the same breath, and as the latter turned towards the Prince to make an observation regarding the needful preparations for the meditated flight, he saw his eyes raised to heaven, and beheld a large tear fall down his cheek.

Unwilling to disturb his sorrowful meditations, he was walking on, when the wailing cry of an infant struck upon their ears.

"Whist, yer honor," said our old friend Denis of yore, the faithful servant of the brave Sarsfield, and who on his master's death had transferred his allegiance to that master's bosom friend and brother-in-arms, St. John.

"Arrah, thin, where's the wee thing? Shure and its mesilf that must see after the craythur."

A little to the right of the road they were traversing, the bright rays of the moon revealed a miserable hut, and from thence the wail of the infant had evidently proceeded; it was now followed by a dismal moan.

"Ochone, my darlint, hould the noise till I see what I

can do for yez," said honest Denis, as leaving the gentlemen he made for the hut in question. The door, if such it could be called, for it was shorn of any support in the shape of a hinge, and partially rested against the wall, was open sufficiently to give admission to Denis, and a bit of candle stuck in a piece of clay revealed the horrors of the scene. On a bench beside a few decaying embers, which, as there was no vent beyond the partially open door, had filled the hut with smoke, sat huddled up, body and knees together, an aged woman on a few rushes. On the earthen floor was the child whose cries had attracted the attention of Denis, with the extended form of an evidently dying woman.

"The Blessed Virgin and the Holy Saints protect us, what have yez there, a craythur living or dead?"

"Hout mon, I ken naething," was the reply. "She came here the morn, and had ganged a' the way frac Auld Reekie. She hae grat a' the day about the bairn, and wha can *I* do, sae auld and sair pinched wi' want mysel? "

Denis said not a word, but went out to his master.

"Arrah, thin, shure if a man's heart is not made intirely of stone, yonder is a sight to break it quite, yer honor. An ould woman, a wee bit of a babe, and anither woman, wid the breath going elane out of her. Will yer honor spare me while I give her a sup of the rale craythur I have in my pouch; it may bring her to her sinses?"

"By all means return, my good Denis, and give her all the help in your power," said the Marshal, "and in the morning you shall take them some money and remove the poor creatures from that dismal habitation."

"If yer honor would but jist step this way and see wid yer own eyes," said Denis, with a low bow, "and thin I will be afther following you as soon as I have given them a drop of comfort."

Denis then made his way back to the hut, and the Chevalier and his companions stepped forward, and looking through the partially open door beheld a scene of misery and unspeakable desolation.

"We can leave the poor creatures in no better hands than those of my faithful Denis," said St. John, turning from the scene of suffering after a moment's survey. "I rejoice that the good fellow was with us," he added, as the party retraced their steps to their lodgings.

We will remain awhile with Denis.

"Dhrink a drap, my poor craythur; shure now if yez will only believe in me, and I'm not the boy to desave you, only a wee sup will do you good."

But the cold hand of the dying woman faintly motioned away the flask which the honest and well-intentioned Denis would have placed to her lips, and then she lay perfectly still and motionless.

For awhile there was no sound save the wail of the infant, the low muttering of the old crone crouched on the hearth-stone, and the sighing of the wind as it swept down the desolate glen.

Denis was a brave soldier, but he averred afterwards that his flesh crept as the hours passed wearily by. All the old stories he had heard in his boyhood thronged thick upon him, and he was quite prepared to hear the wail of the Banshee or to see some of the "*good people*"* peeping in at the door of the ruined hut.

At last the dying woman moved and uttered a deep sigh, and Denis poured a little whiskey into the palm of his hand and wetted her lips, after a vain endeavor to force the flask between her teeth.

* Fairies.

"Gie it till me, mon," exclaimed the old woman in the corner, "deil knows it canna save sic a body as that, but it'll do muckle good to me."

It was almost a relief to Denis to hear a human voice, and handing his flask to the woman he bade her drink, and nothing loth would she have been to empty it of its contents, for she only removed it from her lips on his exclaiming—

"Arrah, thin, hould a bit, lave some for the poor craythur; she may drink a wee sup yet."

At last a low faint whisper fell from her lips. The good man bent down his head to listen.

"The bairn," was all he could distinguish.

"Thruce fer yez, the wee thing must not be left alone intirely. Denis is not the man to let it starve. Be it a boy or a pretty colleen?"

"A girl."

"Arrah, thin, more's the pity. If it was a boy I'd rear it to fight for King James, but as it is a colleen, well, thin, shure she shall be a daughter to me, and I'll stand by her intirely. So die in pace and His holy Mother be wid yez."

"Margaret Lindsay—a—a cavalier—her father."

Then there was silence in the hut, save for the gasping breath which told the end was at hand.

"The poor craythur, what will I do for her?" burst forth from the lips of honest Denis.

"Ye maun e'en let her dee. I mind me ance when my gudemon died, six years syne Martinmas," responded the old woman. "Siccan a fright as I got for twal hours, and then he waur ca'ed hame at last, and a suir weird I hae dree'd broken down wi age and heart-break."

"Shure and I'll bring yez help from his honor. But, whisht now, the life's goin out o' the poor sowl anyhow."

Poor Jessy, for she it indeed was, made an effort to raise

her hand. The rustle of paper struck on the ear of Denis, and putting his hand across her bed of rushes, he perceived a folded paper, crumpled and worn, which the dying woman evidently wished him to have in his keeping.

"I'll give it to his honor, mistress, and die in peace, because your wee bit of a colleen shall niver be forsaken. I wish though you could make me aisy and say its not dyin o' hunger yez are."

"No, good man—no—ganging awa wi the bairn—to a freend in Montrose—fell sick—God—have mercy—"

"Ah, shure, I see it all intirely. You fell ill on the road, and thin, the Lord presarve us, its here yez come to dic."

And the babe had whined itself to sleep in its cold and its hunger, and the withered old crone, still crouching over the smouldering peat, had sunk into a restless sleep, and poor Denis shivered with cold and trembled with the awfulness of the solitude; the dark, lone glen without—within, the woman writhing in the agonies of death.

"Its a purty position, to be shure," said he to himself. "But faix and I'll be afther sayin my beads, for the poor sowl is in her agony." And closing his eyes, to shut out if possible the ghastly sight, none the less vividly present however to his mental vision, he recited the Rosary with all due fervor.

Suddenly the long, loud gasp ceased. The spirit of poor, faithful Jessy had passed away.

"Now, Denis, my boy, what will yez do? I say the best thing intirely is to get out of this place, and take the wee thing wid yez. Thin, later, ye'll be able to take it aisy and maybe give a dacent burial to the poor sowl, God rest her. So good night, or rather good mornin to yez, mother," he added, apostrophizing the sleeping woman, "I lave yez in very quiet company."

Then, tenderly as a woman, he raised the baby in his strong arms, and with a fervent "the Holy Virgin be praised," he passed swiftly out into the gloom and darkness of the night, or rather morning, for it was nearly four o'clock before he reached his master's. He was sore distressed, however, as to what to do with the unfortunate little waif of which he had become so strangely possessed, for the child began to set up a piteous shriek before he arrived at the place of his destination.

"Arrah, thin, what *will* I do wid yez? Its afther wakin up his honor ye'll; and I cannot get yez a wee sup of milk till six o'clock; its a rale pity."

Fortunately, however, for Denis, the child again whined itself to sleep, and resting it gently on one arm whilst he admitted himself with a pass-key, he stepped quietly up stairs and most valiantly discharged his new duties of nurse until the Marshal's bell summoned him as usual at seven in the morning.

"Shure and there's nothin to be done but to take yez along wid me," said he, rising with his sleeping burthen. "Ye'll be a purty colleen, but how I'll get yez to France is a question I can't answer intirely. Faix, his honor must settle that."

Denis presented himself then in his master's chamber, bearing what at first sight appeared to be a bundle in his arms; but, ere he reached the bedside, a loud squall from the hapless little waif made known that it was a small specimen of babyhood, in the full possession of very good lungs, which he had brought with him into the room.

"Why, Denis," exclaimed the Marshal, in no small surprise, "what in the name of fortune have you brought a child here for? Are you out of your senses, man?"

"Plase yer honor, I've got a wee colleen here which I

manc to be a father to, if yer honor has no objections. I thought the wits would clane lave me afther ye wint away last night. The poor sowl niver died till nearly four this mornin, and I touuld her I would take care of her child."

"My good fellow," said the Marshal, rising, "your feelings do you credit, but you know, Denis, *you* cannot take care of it. What's to be done?"

"Ah, what's to be done? Shure and its yer honor must be afther answerin that question yerself. Denis is not the boy that can do it. But she's a swate purty thing, isn't she, yer honor?" And here Denis gently opened the plaid in which the babe was swathed, and displayed its well-formed limbs and sweet face. "When she's awake, yer honor," he added, "she has eyes as black as a coal and as bright as a sunbeam. She's as pretty a girlleen as ever lived, at all, at all."

"She is indeed a beautiful child, Denis. But this is a serious business, my man. Situated as we are, we must think what had best be done with the child."

"I must take her to France, yer honor; that is, suppos-ing yez are agreeable. And a thought strikes me," continued Denis. "The child of Mrs. Fitzgerald, the wife of the captain who yer honor knows was shot at Preston, is bein nursed by Widow Regan. Whisht, thin. Wouldn't it be a rale good thing intirely to give her two babies to fade from her breast and niver say anither word about it? There's a power of things harder to do than for a pretty colleen like Widow Regan to give suck to two babies at once, and Denis O'Sullivan's the boy that will make the matter straight and clane intirely."

But the Marshal made no reply. He was counting in his own mind the great difficulties attendant on conveying two tender infants to Franee in the same vessel in which the

Prince was to sail that night, over and above the serious increase of work to Mrs. Regan, who had been engaged by himself solely to nurse the baby of the widow of a brother officer who died in giving it birth, and which the good Marshal had resolved to adopt in place of the daughter whom death had reft from her parents in early youth.

This he had considered a most hazardous undertaking on account of the tremendous difficulties attendant on their journey to France; but the request of honest Denis, which he was unwilling to refuse and yet felt it imprudent to grant, made the attempt yet more troublesome.

Suddenly the infant opened its large, dark eyes, and held out its tiny hands towards the Marshal, as though to second her rough, honest-hearted protector's request.

" You will find it a very difficult task to accomodate Mrs. Regan to your ideas, Denis. I expect she will give you a flat refusal. However, you have gained your point, as far as I am concerned. I will not take it on myself to cast that innocent helpless child on the charity of others."

" Thin may the heavens be yer honor's bed. Shure and its the happy boy that I am. But, yer honor, I have a secret very heavy at my heart, and I can niver rest till I let it out."

" Be quick, my good fellow. I will hear your secret whilst I dress. You must, however, dispose of that bantling at once. You cannot act as my valet with a child in your arms, and you will expose me to the ridicule of the whole household should it chance to cry."

" Whist, thin, its about Mrs. Regan I want to speak. Saving whin I am in attendance on yer honor I lead an awful lonesome life, and I—I"—

" Well, out with it at once, Denis," said the Marshal, who began to entertain a glimmering idea as to why his man

was beating about the bush, as soon as he spoke of the loneliness of his life.

"Will, thin, Marshal, if Mrs. Regan, the purty colleen, thought it convanient, entirely convanient, a dale of confort would come to me if she would consint to let the priest make us two one, in holy wedlock."

"Are you crazed, Denis? Why, Mrs. Regan is not yet twenty-five years old and you are on the shady side of fifty."

"And a dale better fer her, Marshal, that I should be so ould. The blessed St. Paul says that the husband is the head of the wife. Thin is'nt it the nate and proper thing intirely for him to be oulder than the waker party; and arrah, Marshal dear, is'nt it Denis that's thè proper boy for a colleen. It's tall and well made that I am; barrin my age, what's amiss in me?" and he surveyed himself with evident complacency as he spoke.

"Has Mrs. Regan ever given you reason for supposing she will accept you, Denis?"

"Och no, thin, it wanted a power of thought before I could consint to put the question. So, wi' yer honor's lave, I'll go now and ask her to be Mrs. O'Sullivan, and as soon as she says, 'Yes, I will, Denis,' thin I shall tell her she must suckle this wee thing, for Denis is the boy that'll not be afther asking a favor, whin he knows he has a rale right to command."

"You are a monster of conceit, Denis. However, get back as soon as possible, and try and remember while you are making love, that I am waiting for my valet; mind, if you are absent more than a quarter of an hour I shall send for you."

Denis hurried out of the room with his burthen, which sent up a pitiful cry before he reached the bottom of the

stairease ; and the Marshal remained in bed amusing himself at the fellow's ideas on the subject of marital authority, and wondered if the pretty widow of the late Sergeant would consent to take his man for better or for worse, or bide her time for a more eligible offer.



CHAPTER VII.

DENIS MAKES PROPOSALS TO THE WIDOW REGAN.

OME little distance from the residence in which the Marshal and Lord Mar resided, apartments had been engaged for the widow, and thither honest Denis bent his steps, the little waif who had so unexpectedly fallen in his way crying lustily in his arms.

Widow Regan was a pretty little woman, with a clear skin, a pair of flashing black eyes, and hair of the same color, which was neatly gathered together in a snood or net. Her dress was clean and simple, but coquettishly arranged, and she sat alone at her little breakfast table, on which was spread porridge, milk and bannocks, pouring out a cup of warm milk with one hand, whilst with the disengaged arm she held the orphan child to her breast.

“ Why, Mr. Dennis, man, how you startle a body ; and holy St. Bridget, why, if it is’nt a baby he’s got in his arms. Arrah, thin, bring it to me to kiss ; sure, and I love babies. Sorra’s the day my own child died, though I ought’nt to say so, for it’s in heaven it is.”

“ Och, thin, mavourneen, cast the light of your bright black eyes on my girleen, and tell me if this one is’nt prettier a dale than the wee thing the Marshal gave you to suckle.”

Nay, thin, Mr. Denis, I shall not go far to say that same,” and the pretty widow laid the little Margaret on her lap beside the other chiid, adding, “ but I do myself think black eyes the prettier by a dale ; the wee thing is smart enough, shure.”

"Ah, mavourneen, and ye have the sparkling black eye yourself that dales death and destruction to a poor boy's heart. The wee thing is widout food; give it the suck, darlint, and let me dandle t'other fer you a bit. Jist plase a boy, honey, and do as he asks you."

Searee knowing why she complied with his request, Mrs. Regan took the famished little waif in her arms. It at once nestled itself in her arms as if it was its own natural and proper place, and drew forth right heartily the nourishment nature destines for infants, though hitherto its little existenee had been chiefly derived from goat's milk.

"Well, thin, rarely, Mr. Denis, but the wee thing is pretty, and where on airth did you meet wid her; whose girleen is it?"

These questions followed rapidly one on the other ere Denis could reply.

"Well, thin, honey, the truth of the matter is, I found the baby in a bit hut in a glen. The ould sowl who had care of her was dyin fast, and that makes me remimber, darlint, I must look till her burial. I fetched away the girleen, and his honor has given me lave to bring up the wee Maggie. Your own name, darlint, is'nt it the thruth?"

"Rarely, Mr. Denis, I must beg you not to darlint me so often. It is not the daceent thing at all, at all; and my dear boy, the Sergeant, not been a year cowld in his grave."

"Be angry wid yourself thin, the beauty that ye are. I—"

"Well, what on airth can you do wid a baby, Mr. Denis? Yez has no wife to look afther it at all, at all."

"Whisht, mavourneen; that's just the thing I came to consult ye about. I want a rale purty colleen like yerself, Mrs. Regan, to marry me, if yez know any sich about here. I would say, 'My darlint, will ye take me for better, for

worse,' and, Mrs. Regan, she should have her lines in her pocket afore the blessed sun sets to-night."

"Ah, Mr. Denis, it's the droll boy ye are. I know a power o' purty girls in ould Ireland, but niver a one in this place, and that's the thruth of it."

"Och, but you do though, Mrs. Regan, and by this token, my darlint, it is yer own sweet self I manc. Say the word, mavourneen, am I too ould or too ugly? If not, I've a purty bit o' money to the fore, good wages, and a kind master, and barrin I'm a bit hot at times, I beg lave to say I'm the boy who would make a good husband to the Widow Regan. So make me happy, darlint, and say yes."

"Oh, yes, Mr. Denis, sartainly," said the blushing widow. "I'm sure you have so surprised me. And the wee thing, will I be afther suckling it as well as t'other?"

"Yes, yes, plase, my own darlint. Och, but it is the happy boy I am," said Denis, capering with delight. "But now I must go to his honor, and thin to bury the poor woman, God rest her sowl; thin afther that I'll come back to yer, and if we cannot get a priest in this haythenish place, we must be afther gettin the lines as soon as we are in France, and its the happiest couple we'll be in the big, wide world, alanna, and—"

A loud knock at the door interrupted the overjoyed Denis. It was a boy with a message from the Marshal.

"Yer honor must ralely forgive me," he said, when he reached his master's room, "the purty widow has said she will marry me, and it's the happiest boy in life I am."

"And has she agreed to nurse the baby?"

"She took to the wee girleen as if it was the rale proper thing for her to do. It's the obadiant good wife she'll be afther makin. But, yer honor, I forgot to ask yez kindly to rade those bit lines that dyin sowl gave me; and sure as

it's the duty of a good Christian to bury the dead, I must go and put her in a bit of a grave before the mornin is over."

"Thank God, Denis, that we turned our steps in that direction last night," said the Marshal, as he perused the words written on the torn and crumpled sheet of paper. "The poor child's father was a promising young officer well known to Lord Mar. She shall be reared with the child I have already adopted, and I will amply remunerate your wife that is to be for nursing her."

A blank look of disappointment spread itself over the face of honest Denis. Poor fellow, with all the generous impulse of a true Hibernian heart, he had intended to rear the little waif himself. The Marshal observed the cloud pass over his face, and said :

"Why, Denis, do you feel sorry to give the child into the keeping of Lady St. John. Remember, my good fellow, your wife may have a family of her own, and, if so, may well spare the child of others; besides, its father was under Lord Mar, and"—

"Arrah, yer honor, what you plase to say is the truth entirely, and I would be afther doin the purty girl een an injury to keep her in my humble home."

"Well, then, Denis," replied the Marshal, placing ten sovereigns in his man's hand, "you will give this to Mrs. Regan as a small present from myself, and I advise you not to think of marrying till your return to St. Germains. You have to go to the hut and get some one to bury the old nurse; it will be late in the afternoon before you can get back, and in the evening, well"—and here the Marshal paused, as if not knowing how to proceed; then he added, "I may require your attendance on myself."

Denis was profuse in his thanks for the present to his intended bride, and the Marshal having supplied him with

abundant means to defray the expenses of the interment of the dead woman, as well as a present for the wretched inmate of the hut, he set off on his errand; nor did he make his appearance again till the afternoon had somewhat advanced, thus verifying the truth of the Marshal's words, that he could not bury the dead and marry a wife on one and the same day.

When the faithful servant returned to the Marshal's apartments, he found him closeted with the Earl of Mar. After awhile, on the departure of that nobleman, he was admitted.

" You are a trusty man, Denis," said the Marshal. " I shall have much work for you to do before the night is over; do not fail to be with me at six o'clock."



CHAPTER VIII.

OVER TO FRANCE.



RUE to a moment, at the hour the Marshal had appointed, Denis was in attendance.

"The clans march at eight o'clock for Aberdeen, Denis," said his master; "but, before that hour, you will be in readiness to follow the king by a back way to the waterside. He will be accompanied by Lord Mar. A boat will be in readiness to convey him on board a small vessel."

"And the king's baggage, your honor?"

"It has been sent forward with the main body of the army, in order not to excite suspicion. For this reason, sentries are as usual placed at the door of his lodgings. Several gentlemen of his household will follow later, joining him in the same vessel. But we have unfortunately two poor infants to look after. Rather awkward baggage," he muttered to himself. "So you must at once hurry to Mrs. Regan and bid her go with you to the vessel directly; see her and her charge safely stowed away, and then hasten back; time wears away; two hours hence the king must be on his way to the boat."

Denis bowed in true military fashion, and hastened to Mrs. Regan.

"Its sorry I am, darlint, that you cannot have your lines till we get out of this place; but barrin that, 'tis a lucky colleen yez are, for shure his honor has sint yez ten gould guineas for a weddin presint, and its married we're to be as soon as we get over to Franec."

"Ten guineas!" ejaculated Widow Regan, gazing with

no small satisfaction at the glittering coin which Denis counted piece by piece into her outstretched hand.

"And now, my darlint," he added, "no time must be lost, the master says, for its this very night yerself and the wee things must go wid me to the vessel."

The Marshal's handsome gift had much to do in soothing Mrs. Regan's feelings under the disappointment she felt at not having become the wife of Denis that very day, and with his help, for he was as handy as any woman, the two babies, which had so strangely fallen in the way of the good Marshal, were snugly wrapped in warm plaids and carried in the arms of the valet and his intended bride to the boat, which speedily conveyed the nurse and her charge to the vessel.

The Marshal remained closeted with the Chevalier during the two hours which preceded that flight from his native country. The proposition of which he had so indignantly rejected when first suggested to him, and which he had only acceded to later because his best friends and advisers had urged upon him that by so doing he best consulted not only his own personal safety but that of his numerons followers.

Pale and dejected, the unfortunate Prince was seated at a table busily occupied in tracing a few lines to the Duke of Argyll. That letter contained the remains of the money he had brought over from France when about to start on this disastrous expedition.*

He begged that it might be distributed amongst the inhabitants of some villages which the necessities of war had compelled his followers to set fire to on his retreat from Perth. His tender conscience thus satisfied, he signified his readiness to depart. Two men whose fidelity could be relied

* See Chambers' History of Rebellions in Scotland.

upon had been placed as sentinels before the door of his lodgings, and after a careful reconnoitering of the immediate neighborhood by his friends, the Chevalier stepped cautiously out, attended by Lord Mar, one servant, and Denis.

Turning speedily into a dimly-lighted back street, they approached a desolate and little frequented spot which brought them to the water's-edge, at which the boat was in readiness which was to carry him to the vessel, and before eight o'clock, the hour appointed for the clans to march, he had embarked, together with several persons of distinction, most of whom belonged to his household.

Every care had been taken by the buxom Widow Regan that her infant charge should be kept as still as possible, and she succeeded well in her effort, so that when, after several hours had passed, an infant voice was at last heard to give utterance to that particular squall with which we are all more or less acquainted, it gave rise to many curious conjectures and some badinage on the part of the friends of St. John, in which the Chevalier himself joined, and finally Mrs. Regan was bade to bring the two babies for the inspection of the prince and the other distinguished personages on board.

"By my faith, St. John, this is an increase to your family; what will her ladyship say," said the Chevalier, when the burst of laughter, which had greeted the advent of the two infants, had died away.

"Like a good dame and gentle lady as she is, your highness, she will yield to them a mother's care. I nothing doubt her willingness in that respect. God hath taken from us our only daughter, and hath sent us two to fill her place."

"One hath eyes as black as the raven's wing, those of the other are blue as the azure of an Italian sky," muttered the Chevalier. "I pray you, tell me, St. John, what you

know of the parentage of these baby specimens of humanity, and how it was, that amidst the perils attendant on our departure, these young damsels fell in your way."

"They have been both made orphans by the evils of our times, your highness. The lassie with eyes of jet is the little waif whose cries we both heard when in the glen two nights since. She was in the care of a dying woman, who gave a paper to my man Denis, declaring her to be the orphan child of a Jacobite gentleman, one Robert Lindsey. The paper, moreover, adds that her maternal grandfather is a woolen merchant of Edinburgh, who turned his daughter out of doors because she had married a Jacobite and a Papist, and that the child bears her mother's name of Margaret. The woman was on her way to Dundee to seek protection from a friend of the child's father, when she fell ill. After this paper was written she appears to have bought shelter in that miserable hut in which she expired, in presence of my man Denis."

"And what of the blue-eyed bairn, St. John," looking intently at the infant, who, in true baby fashion, held one of his fingers tight in her baby hand. "What may be her parentage, Marshal. I must have all the ins and outs of these little ones."

"The little blue-eyed lassie, your highness, is of real Milesian extraction. She is named Isabel Fitzgerald, and"—

The Chevalier started at the mention of the name. "Surely," he replied, "you are not about to tell me that this helpless infant is the child of Captain Fitzgerald."

"The same, your highness; she is his posthumous daughter. His beautiful young wife was on intimate terms with Lady St. John, and begged me to protect her child should she die, and if her life was spared to allow her to accompany me to France. She died at Perth when the child was but

a week old, and true to my promise to the poor young lady, I engaged the good woman now present to rear my poor friend's orphan child."

"Brave as a lion in the field, my good Marshal, and yet tender and compassionate as a woman," said the Chevalier. "I wonder now what fate has in store for *you*, my little ones. Your lot hitherto has not been as bad as it might have been, seeing that the Marshal St. John had you under his wing."

In order to escape the vigilance of the English cruisers, who maintained a sharp lookout for the exiled Prince, it was deemed safest to make over to Norway and coast along the shores of Germany and Holland; having done which the Prince and his companions arrived safely at Gravelines, between Dunkirk and Calais, five days after the flight from Montrose.



CHAPTER IX.

A PRINCE AT A DISCOUNT.

T has been well said of the most unfortunate Stuart race, that they were in advance of the times in which their troubled lot was cast. The pages of history also reveal to us the fact that they were gifted with great affability and natural kindness of disposition.

The flight of the unfortunate Chevalier de St. George, who undoubtedly *was* the King of England, as to hereditary succession, terminated the Rebellion, as it was called, of 1715.

*Easy, good natured and naturally inclined to indolence, the Chevalier was easily led astray, either by so-called friends or by the meretricious beauties by whom he was speedily surrounded, and his true friends and advisers looked anxiously forward to the time of his marriage with some young Princess. The poor Chevalier, however, was at a terrible discount in the matrimonial market.

But a fair, amiable and high-spirited Princess came to the rescue. I wish I could tell you that in the end he requited her love, as he ought to have done. Some seventeen years old was Clementina Sobieski. She was daughter, you know, of Prince James of Poland, and her young heart became deeply interested in the fate of the last scion of the Stuart race, and dazzled, too, perhaps, at the glittering prospect of a throne, should the Chevalier finally succeed in wresting the crown of his forefathers from the Elector of Hanover. She joyfully acceded to the proposal of the envoy of James, when he presented himself at her father's court.

*Jesse's Memoirs of the Pretenders.

Of course, one may easily understand that it was death to the plots and plans of the Whig Government of *him* who really occupied the throne of England, this overture of marriage on the part of the unfortunate man who had been despoiled of his birthright.

If he remained unmarried, well and good; the male hereditary line would become extinct in his person. So that they exerted their vigilance by spies, and intrigues, and villainies in every direction, to prevent him from having a wife.

A nice business it seems, on looking back through the dim vista of years gone by. One hundred thousand pounds set on his head; and though they had driven “the King over the waters,” as the Jacobites called him, to Rome for a refuge, yet this poor Chevalier and his friends had to carry out their plans by dint of stratagem, because Englishmen at the head of the British Government had elected that he whom they had cast away should not espouse a wife.

The gallant Irishman, Charles Wogan, who had been in the field at Preston, and then taken prisoner and sent to Newgate, and who had cleverly managed to make his escape, was chosen by the Chevalier as his envoy to the young lady whose hand he sought; and she, who had pitied the misfortunes of the Stuart race—and pity is near akin to love, we are told—after all preliminaries were settled, set off with a small escort to meet her future husband at Bologna.

But matters oozed out, as they often do, when of a necessity there are many perforce invited to keep a secret; added to which, we are told, that the Princess was a long time making her preparations, just as ladies do now-a-days, I suppose. But, however, be it as it may, it got bruited abroad that the Lady Clementina and her mother were passing through Innspruck in the Tyrol. Whereupon the English

Minister at Vienna applied to the Emperor for aid, who, by the way, shines in this rascally piece of business, seeing that this Clementina was the grand-daughter of that John Sobieski, who defeated the Turks before the walls of Vienna.

Nevertheless, there are wheels within wheels in political as in private matters. The Emperor cared very little about Clementina's grandfather having saved his own father, and very much for the support which England afforded him in his efforts to acquire fresh possessions, and not at all, one may well suppose, about the lovely young girl whom it was just likely might prove a thorn in the side of a certain party in England, as by becoming the bride of the Chevalier she might also perpetuate the Stuart line.

Fancy, young ladies, what your feelings would be, if on your way to meet your future husband, you were suddenly arrested and put in confinement, as was this Clementina. In company with her mother she was thus arrested and detained under guard of General Heister at Innsprueck.

More powerless than the meanest man in the land to obtain an act of justice, such as the immediate liberation of his intended bride, the Chevalier was fain to allow Wogan to descend to stratagem in order to extricate the Princess from the position in which she was placed by the vigilance of the English government.

He obtained fictitious passports, and induced three of his own kinsmen to help him carry out his plans. He decided that they, with one trusty valet, should form the male portion of the party.

Mrs. Misset, the wife of Captain Misset, one of Wogan's relations, was prevailed on to lend her aid and personate the aunt of the Princess, and a smart, intelligent maid of her own, by name Jeannette, was to be introduced to her, change clothes with her, and remain in her bed for one day

after the flight of the latter, in order to deceive her Austrian *keepers* and lead them to believe she was still under their charge.

Wogan had taken out passports as for the Count and Countess de Cernes, who were traveling to the Santa lake at Loretta. The supposed Count and his wife were one Major Gaydon and Mrs. Misset. Captain O'Toole, the valet, with Misset, were to act as armed outriders.

Clad in a shabby hood and riding habit, both made in the English fashion, Jeannette, pleading that the Princess required her attendance on some feminine occupation, was allowed to pass unquestioned, the gentleman usher, Chateaudean, having asked permission to let her out at what time he pleased.

No fear as to the chance of failure dismayed the mind of Clementina; on the contrary, the excitement was a source of pleasure to her. She was infinitely delighted at the hope that after all she and her friends might prove more than a match for the cold, calculating policy of the English Ambassador and the crafty Emperor, who, to answer his own selfish political ends, was prosecuting even to imprisonment the grand-daughter of the man who had so heroically delivered Vienna from the Turkish army.



CHAPTER X.

THE ESCAPE.

EOR a short time, as the hour of her departure arrived, the courage of the Princess gave way, and burying her face on the bosom of her mother, she shed many bitter tears, with a regretful pang perhaps at the thought that she had resigned her quiet home in Silesia for the dazzling prospect of a crown. However, the die was cast; her pride was piqued at the shameless way in which she had been arrested, and forcing back her tears, the young princess allowed her mother to array her in the hood and cloak of Jeannette, who, for some hours at least, would have to personate herself.

Again a sob of anguish as the beautiful head of the fair Clementina once more reposed on the neck of her fond mother, and then she tore herself away and accompanied Chateauduc to the gate, he carrying a bundle composed of her jewels and some of the richest of her clothes. Believing her to be only the girl whom he admitted some few hours previously, the porter allowed her to pass through unquestioned, and the next moment the Polish Princess, in the darkness of the winter night, found herself without the gates of her prison-house, and fearlessly resigned herself into the hands of strangers, for, with the exception of Wogan, whom she had never seen till he came to her father's court to solicit her hand for the Chevalier, she had never before beheld the companions of her flight. It was past the hour of midnight, the wind howled in hollow gusts, and amidst a tempest of hail and snow so severe that the sentinel on duty had sought shelter in a tavern near at hand, the Princess Clementina groped her way to the corner of the street, where Wogan awaited her coming in a state of the greatest anxiety.

"Have courage, your highness," he whispered, as the half-fainting Princess clung to him for support, "I hope the worst is over."

At that moment the faint sound of carriage wheels advancing through the thickly falling snow struck upon her ear.

The equipage contained Mrs. Misset and three gentlemen, whom Wogan introduced to her as the companions and attendants of her flight.

Safely ensconced in the warm carriage, her wet hood and habit removed, and a large cloak heavily lined with fur thrown over her by Mrs. Misset, and a glass of good wine from a flask produced by her husband, the Princess gradually regained her former courage.

In order to deceive General Heister if possible for twenty-four hours, the princess, for two days prior to her flight, had kept her bed on pretext of illness, and during the whole of the next day the maid Jeannette was to occupy it in her place, and to screen her mother from the imputation of conniving at her escape, the Princess left a letter on her toilet table asking pardon for her flight, on the plea that by all laws, human and divine, she was obliged to follow her husband.

The morning light having dawned, revealed to the travellers a wild and open country, and the carriage stopped for a fresh relay of horses at a small wayside inn. To lull suspicion, Clementina was again arrayed in the serving-maid's attire, and conducted to a warm room, was seated by a large fire and refreshed with the best viands the house afforded, after which she again resumed her journey.

The young girl could not, however, suppress a weary sigh as she gazed out on the bleak landscape, the leafless branches of the trees garlanded with the heavy snow drift, the sky of a leaden hue, the air piercingly cold.

"I trust we shall distance our pursuers," said Wogan, at length breaking silence, and wishful to raise the spirits of the Princess. "We have been several hours on the road, and the caution of having relays of six horses at every change was wisely adopted. Your highness' flight, too, will scarcely be ascertained for some hours in consequence of your being supposed to be ill."

"True, my kind friend," said Clementina. "No one but my gentleman usher would have access to my apartment until eight this morning. Poor Chateaudean, and my dearest mother, and the intelligent girl whom you sent to personate me, I tremble, dear Mrs. Misset, to think how it will fare with them."

"They will not be detained, your highness. The bird has flown which your enemies so unjustly imprisoned, and with God's help, though our escape has been fraught with danger, you will soon be safely delivered out of the hands of your persecutors."

Well for Clementina Sobieski that she did not live in these days of electric telegraph.

The day was far advanced when they changed horses for the third time, and they had intended after traveling some time longer to rest for the night. The state of the roads, bad at all times, was now laden with the heavy snow drift, and their progress became alarmingly impeded. In case of being overtaken by a special courier from Innspruck, Wogan had sent on O'Toole and Misset to a village called Wellishville, and stopping at the chief inn of the place, they called for supper. Benumbed with cold and fatigue, they threw aside their traveling cloaks and seated themselves by a large fire, and O'Toole had just observed to his companion that it was past midnight and the way evidently clear of danger, when, as they sat down to eat, the courier himself entered the room.

Like themselves, he was weary and fatigued with the severity of the weather, and O'Toole, glancing significantly at Misset, begged the courier to share with himself and his friend the tempting and smoking viands then on the table.

Nothing loth was he to accept the invitation, and his hearty meal was washed down by copious draughts of wine, followed by *eau de vie*. True is the saying, "that when the wine is in, the sense is out." The courier's speech grew thick and incoherent, and at last his tongue blabbed out his secret, and dealing a heavy blow on the table with his fist, he exclaimed :

" I am sent here to intercept the banditti who have carried off the Princess Sobieski. See, gentlemen, here are my despatches."

" What say you, Mein Herr ?" exclaimed Misset, with an air of well feigned astonishment, which almost overturned the gravity of the laughter-loving O'Toole. " Is it possible the Princess has fled from Innspruck ?"

" What I have told you is indeed too true," replied the courier. " The English Ambassador is enraged at the carelessness with which the whole affair has been managed. General Heister, who had the custody of the Princess, has negligently discharged himself of his duty. She was not missed until eight o'clock this morning. I have ridden all day and all night by a straight route in order that I and my men may intercept the party. The Emperor will be much annoyed if this marriage be accomplished. It is well known how he courts the favor of the English."

The two Irish gentlemen glanced at each other and then at the despatches which they so ardently longed to obtain ; and again and again they filled to the brim the glass of the unfortunate courier till he became so intoxicated that they assisted the inn-keeper in carrying him to bed, having previously purloined the despatches, which they tore to pieces,

and after so doing committed the pieces to the flames. They then left the house with the first gleam of daybreak, leaving the helpless courier in a state wholly unfit to travel for at least twenty-four hours.

You may well imagine that Wogan and his party made themselves very merry at the success of the enterprise of O'Toole and his companion; in fact, the two had proved themselves mainly instrumental in the furtherance of the escape of the Princess.

Many more mischances on the road, caused by the breaking down of their equipage, and unexpected delays arising from horses not being in readiness at places at which they were expected, at times threatened a fatal issue to the journey; but, save when these accidents occurred, Clementina bore up and charmed her companions by her cheerful, affable disposition.

At length, worn out with privation and fatigue they one day reached the confines of the Venetian territories, free from the machinations of the English, and arriving in safety at Bologna the disappointment awaited her of finding James absent on a secret expedition to Madrid.

"I will follow him thither immediately," said the poor harassed Princess. "I cannot bear the suspense of awaiting his stay in this strange city, every hour seems like an age."

However, the fair Sobieski was open to conviction, and the remonstrances of her friends and, above all, their opinion, that by leaving Bologna she might rush anew into the trouble from which she had but just escaped, and fall into the hands of the agents of George the First, who were on the alert in every quarter, made her determine to remain in privacy till the return of her future husband.

The marriage was performed by proxy in the Chevalier's absence, but completed with the customary solemnities immediately on his return.

CHAPTER XI.

UNDER THE SAME ROOF TREE.

HE home of the Marshal St. John and his wife, our old friend the Lady Florenee, was not at all unlike that of the saintly Sir Thomas More, the great Chancellor of England. Both the Marshal and his wife were rich. "The poor you have always with you," the Gospel truth uttered by the lips of our Lord Himself was recognized by each of them. St. Germain abounded with poor people, for it was, as in 1690, the chief rendezvous of the Jacobite party, and was still the abiding place of the children, now grown up to manhood, of those who had suffered under the reign of the Dutch monarch. It was in fine the dwelling place of those who, in years yet to come, would again raise the watchword throughout England and Scotland which the Hanoverian dynasty termed rebellion.

Like another Sir Thomas More, the Marshal suffered the grey walls of his chateau in the valley to shelter not unfrequently many who sprang not of his race, and of his own abundance the sick and the needy were bounteously assisted.

Beneath his roof grew up with his grandson the orphan children Margaret and Isabel. They were regarded as the adopted daughters of the Marshal and his lady. One of these children lies fair to become a beautiful woman, for Margaret's skin is fair as a lily; her features regular and classical in their outline; her eyes, large, dark, and lustrous, are veiled by long silken lashes; her form tall and slender.

Young as she is, she has already learned to assume an air of domineering importance over the fair, timid little girl

who, as yet, can boast no charms beyond her soft blue eyes and golden hair. Her features, unlike those of her foster-sister, are irregular ; her mouth too large to be pretty ; her form angular and awkward ; yet without there is a pleasing expression in her plain face, and she may develop later into a passably fair woman, when time shall have rounded mayhap the at present ungainly form, and increasing age give the features an air of due proportion ; they are far too large at present to be in keeping with the childish face. She is shy and quiet, with a strong childish love in her little heart for the only friends she has ever known, the good Marshal and his wife.

A beautiful boy, nearly of the same age as the little girls, is their companion. He appears a perfect little Hercules beside these children ; soft curls of rich brown hair fall over his shoulders ; his hazel eyes are full of intelligence, and he seems to affect more the society of Margaret than that of the timid little girl, who has meekly submitted to be cast aside as it were when the imperious Margaret willed it should be so.

Margaret, too, is clever beyond her years. She seems intuitively to take in the instruction she receives without difficulty to herself.

Isabel is rather less intelligent, but what she lacks in talent she will make up for in perseverance. She plods patiently over the same task assigned to Margaret, and looks wistfully at her companions' gambols, but she will not lay her book aside, or think of joining them till she too has accomplished her task. Such a child as this will make a patient heroine should her path be strewn with thorns rather than flowers.

The honest nurse, formerly the Widow Regan, still holds that post in the Marshal's household. Both children had

drawn their nurture from the same breast, but the foster mother yielded up her heart to little Isabel, the first poor waif that had been put under her care.

"Mark those children," said the Lady St. John to her daughter-in-law, as she looked forth from the open windows of a pleasant morning-room on that lady's little son and the two orphans. Margaret, the first in every sport the bolder boy suggested, Isabel timidly standing by his side, seeming to be with them but not of them. She always lingered near the boy, as if in a manner craving his help.

"That child Margaret reminds me always of some little elf," said the younger lady. "Clever and beautiful undoubtedly, but she will require careful training, young as she is. Nothing gives her greater pleasure than to throw Isabel into the shade."

"Nurse entertains almost a positive aversion for the child," remarked Lady St. John. "I tell her it is very wrong, for Margaret is so young as to be scarcely responsible. I wish my dear old friend, Grace Wilmot, were not too old to be plagued with a wayward child, I would put Mistress Margaret under her charge at once."

"Grace, dearest madam," said the old lady, who happened to be within hearing, "is not that far gone but that she can instruct Miss Margaret how she should demean herself. Nurse told me but yesterday that she is fast becoming a most mischievous little sprite in daring, far exceeding Madame's son, and so vain and haughty withal that there is no bearing the place with her. As to Miss Isabel, young as Margaret is, she makes her ever the butt of her childish sarcasm."

"You will oblige me, then, dear Grace, if you will resume the post of preceptress a few hours daily, which you have never held since my dearest Beatrice died. I will tell

both the children that they are to yield you an implicit obedience."

On the evening of the day on which Grace, with her seventy years over her head, agreed again to resume duties so long abandoned, she communicated the wishes of Lady Florence to the nurse.

The features of Grace, erst the handmaiden of the court beauty of Queens Mary Stuart and Mary Beatrice, then her companion and her friend and confidant, had undergone but little change from the hand of time. It is strange, but nevertheless true, that oftentimes the features of a really plain person wear better than those cast in a softer mould. Rugged and hard of lineament in youth and middle age, they had rather softened as years passed on, whilst her always fine eyes had lost nothing of their brightness. Her figure was erect as a dart; her hair, white as silver, was laid in smooth bands under her coif.

She was, as when I first presented her to you, a silent, reserved woman, commanding the respect, if not the love, of all who came within the range of her influence. Severe she was to herself, but kind and lenient to others, and she was the trusted friend of the Marshal and his wife, as well as of the wife of their son.

It was a pleasant summer evening. Through the leafy woods you could discern the towers of the palace of St. Germain. It was now untenanted, for the beloved friend and mistress of Lady Florence had passed to her eternal rest. The hedges teem with wild flowers, which send up a balmy fragrance on the air, and the nightingale is warbling its most plaintive note.

"It is time the children should be put to bed," said nurse, when Grace had made known the wish of the Lady St. John. "I can hear their voices in the garden but can-

not see them. I will ring the bell for the maid to bring them up. But I was after saying, Mrs. Wilmot, I wonder if that child Margaret *does* come of good stock? My good man Denis found her in a lonesome hut in a Scottish glen. A dying woman had the wee thing in her arms. There *was* a bit of paper, 'tis true, saying she was the child of one Mr. Lindsey, but that is all that is known about the proud little miss, who gives herself such airs over me, her own foster-mother, that whiles I cannot do with her at all. She were but a few weeks old when she was picked up, as a body may say. The woman who had charge of her was a poor starvin body, and the place very lonesome. 'Twas my boy Denis who saved the child's life; he wrapped it up in his cloak, carried it to the Marshal, and asked him to let him bring it to me to give it suck. He *is* a jewel, Mrs. Wilmot; one of the best boys that ever lived; fancy a great fellow like he is walking to the Marshal's lodgings with a wee bit baby in his arms, after watching all night by a dyin woman, and asking lave to rear the child as his own, and thin he brings it me and puts it alongside dear Miss Isabel for the breast; it was on that morning that my dear boy made me the happy woman by askin me to take him for my husband; and sure it was disappointed my poor boy was when the Marshal said he would adopt the child and bring it up as his own, and"—

At that moment both the nurse and Grace started, for they fancied they heard a movement behind them.

"Bless me, what was that noise? I'm sure I thought something moved," said nurse, who was rather given to be superstitious, "and sure everything looks quite ghosty now. The moon has risen; I must ring again; Annette is late with those children."

Just then, however, the prattle of little voices was heard, and Edward St. John and Isabel bounded into the nursery.

"Where is Miss Margaret?" exclaimed nurse.

"I have been a long while looking for the young lady," said the bonne; "she is very mischievous and naughty; I thought she might have got to the nursery before me."

"Strange; where can she be?" said nurse. "However, do you hear the children say their prayers, and prepare them for bed, and I will go and seek after her."

Neither Grace nor nurse were mistaken when they thought they heard a movement near them. Had they turned round a moment sooner, they would have seen a little white face, shaded by curls of jet black hair, peering in upon them through the half-opened nursery door. The child stood as one spell-bound. She had run away from the other children and escaped to the nursery first; and hearing her own name mentioned, with a curiosity from which older persons are often not exempt, she paused to listen.

Her features grew rigid as the words of her foster-mother fell on her ear, and she clasped her tiny hands upon her heart as if she would still its wild throbbing.

From that night young Margaret's new life began. She was already old in proud and passionate feeling when the painful revelation so mortifying to the child's self-love was concluded.

She stole away to her bed-room quite alone, took off her clothes herself with a marvellous rapidity, pushed back the mass of rich hair which fell over her burning temples, and by the light of the moon made her way to the small white-curtained bed destined for her use and placed opposite to that of Isabel.

She feigned to be asleep when, after a long and fruitless search, nurse came to examine the bed-room, though with little or no hope that she should find her there.

"You are very naughty, Miss Margaret," said nurse, on discovering her in bed. "You give me no end of trouble,

and I shall complain of you to Lady St. John. To undress yourself sure, and go to bed without saying your prayers, and all your nice clothes laying on the ground, too."

But nurse met with no reply, and drawing down the bed-clothes a little lower, found the little girl asleep as she believed.

"A strange child—a strange child," she went away muttering to herself. "One would almost think 'the good people' had brought a little elf of their own to the hut in which my boy Denis found her."

The pale moonbeams cast a sickly light athwart the chamber, the little Isabel had been placed in bed and had long since fallen asleep, nurse and Grace had descended to the lower apartments, and a dead silence reigned in the upper stories of the large old building.

Time crept on, the old clock in the turret struck the hour of eleven, and one by one the doors of the various sleeping apartments were closed as the household retired for the night.

But there was one who kept silent and dreary watch, over whose young head scarce ten summers had passed away, one who, in the hours that intervened between night and morning, had merged at once, in thought, and feeling, and passion, from childhood to womanhood, who had bridged over the flowery season of childhood and early youth. But the chasm had left a frightful void in her young heart, and when twenty summers shall have made a woman of Margaret Lindsey, she will neither think nor feel with greater intensity than on this terrible night; her proud and haughty nature will not be one iota colder and haughtier than at present.

Like a wan spectre sits the child by the latticed casement, looking out on the still landscape lighted up by the silvery moonbeams, the tiny hand is placed on the burning brow, and ever and again she speaks half aloud.

"*Found in a hut!* Was not that what she said? Yes, I remember it well; and that Denis, *her* husband and the Marshal's servant, was going to bring me up as his child. *His* child, indeed! Why, I am a gentleman's child." And here the small hand was clenched so that the nails penetrated within the tender palm. "*Found in a hut!* My mother must have been very poor, then. And she, that ugly Isabel, *she* is the daughter of the Marshal's friend, for they all say that. And why was I born poor and saved from death by a serving-man any more than she?" and as she spoke she darted an angry glance at the sleeping occupant of the bed beside her. "They tell me I am a proud and haughty child, and it is good to be humbled, and so Madame Wilmot is to be put over me, and—oh, I wish, I wish I was a woman, I would"—

At that moment the little girl's colloquy was cut short by the appearance of a large bat, which flapped its huge wings against the easement, and it was with difficulty she kept down the shriek that rose to her lips.

The effect of the fright had passed away, and pale and cold as the white moonbeams, she had crept to her bed, but pausing on her way thither, she darted a look of intense hatred at Isabel.

"I hate you," said she between her set teeth. "I would harm you if I dared. Why are you a happier girl than I am. *Found in a hut*, hungry and cold, and they *all* know it. The very servants know it," she repeated, rocking herself to and fro in her bed. "Shall I ask Lady St. John if it be true? No, I won't. Nurse never tells stories. I will keep it all to myself for awhile. They call me a child. Ah, ah, ah, that is not true, or if I *am* a child, I do not think and feel like one."

There was a long pause in this communion with self, for her

tears now fell thick and fast. All the pangs, and passions, and jealousies of womanhood were already racking that tender bosom.

"What will they say to me in the morning?" she said. "It makes one's eyes hot and red when one cries. I must be a woman, and keep back my tears. I feel almost like one, though only a little girl."

Poor Margaret! Proud and passionate; such a child in years, yet so old in thought and feeling. At length the clock struck the hour of three, and then she laid her aching head on the pillow and wept herself to sleep.

Small wonder that at seven o'clock she could not raise her throbbing head, her hands were parched with a burning fever, her brain disordered, the doctor was sent for, and declared that the child had all the symptoms of brain fever.

Grace and the nurse then spoke of her strange conduct the previous evening, her undressing herself, having concealed herself from the other children, and it was at once supposed that the attack of illness was then coming on.

But nurse noticed that in the ravings of delirium the child mumbled incessantly about something that evidently preyed on her mind.

"*I was found in a hut, I was found in a hut,*" she kept saying to herself.

"There is something on that child's mind, nurse," said Lady St. John and the doctor. "Has any one named to her the circumstances under which she was found when an infant?"

The nurse then spoke of her conversation with Mrs. Wilmot. Was it possible the child had overheard it?

Yes, of that there could be no doubt; and granting the idea to be correct, then what a disposition must that be for the narration to have left such an impression on the mind.

Lady St. John and her daughter-in-law might well tremble for the future of their young charge.

Such a character rarely steers in a middle course. It either ends in being atrociously wicked, or, by the grace of God and the workings of its own strong will, may be moved to good. Such a one may develop into a monstrous sinner or become one of heaven's glorified saints.



CHAPTER XII.

AFTER MANY YEARS.

S it is not my intention to chronicle the sayings and doings of childhood except in so far as is necessary to show the truth of the old saying, "The child is father to the man," you will please imagine ten summers to have passed away since that night of young Margaret's escapade and the illness that resulted therefrom.

It was not very long after the child's recovery before Lady St. John decided that the wisest course to be pursued was to send the damsel to a convent school. Thither, however, she was accompanied by Isabel, with the hope that the example of her gentle, winning way would in the end act beneficially, and help, in a silent, unobtrusive way, to tame Margaret's fiery spirit.

The child had remained ill for some weeks, delirious for several days, but as she never reverted, as she became convalescent, to the conversation she had evidently heard, and which it was certain had chafed her proud spirit beyond her child's powers of endurance, Lady St. John had given the nurse strict orders never in any way to touch on the subject of her late illness. During the time, however, that intervened between young Margaret's recovery and the day on which she left for the first time the shelter of her beneficent protectors' roof she was closely watched, and no opportunity neglected by which this strange child's fearfully strong passions might be nipped in the bud—a resolve wisely taken, and judiciously carried out, and all the more necessary because the young damsel so carefully locked up in her own little breast the knowledge that she had obtained merely by

an unfortunate accident. The point, too, in her conduct that the Lady Florence least liked was, that her *protégée*, with the astuteness of one three times her own age, parried all the attacks which she herself and her friend Grace skilfully made, by introducing occasionally into conversation the mention of the orphan state of herself and Isabel.

The lips of the young girl remained resolutely sealed ; she was armed at all points, and invulnerable to any attack.

"The nuns will probe my young damsel and discover what stuff she is made of," said Grace, with a quiet laugh, as she exhibited for Lady St. John's approbation the trousseau of the two little girls. "As far as she dares to show it, my young lady does not give herself even the trouble of hiding the aversion she feels for gentle little Isabel. But mind, if I ever read a character rightly in my whole life, Margaret has a woman of determination to deal with in Dame Agatha."

And verily so she had. Even the gentle Isabel almost feared the Sister, who had somewhat less of the winning ways about her for which good nuns are generally noted ; added to which her physique was somewhat formidable, for she was exceedingly tall of stature and hard of feature. Forbidding to those who were not acquainted with her many virtues she certainly was, but, like a nut, she was hard and rough to outward appearance ; only reach her heart, and, like tho kernel, it was sweet and soft.

Thus, despite the exterior and the want of that *suaviter in modo* which wins the hearts of old and young, but more especially of the latter, this Dame Agatha had been chosen by the unanimous voice of the Sisterhood head mistress of the school, and many were they whose youthful hearts had beat when first brought within the range of her influence, but who had soon learned to love and respect her as their dearest friend.

Having said this much, and also that Graec, who took the young damsels to the Benedictine Abbey, also informed the Sister of the incident I have alluded to, I shall merely add that Dame Agatha did her best. The young lady required the reins to be held tight, and this nun was a well qualified person to tame her into subjection if she *could* be tamed. But Dame Agatha's efforts were doomed to prove fruitless. She toiled for her, prayed for her, made novenas for her, was now severe, then lenient, but all to no avail. She left the convent school, at the age of eighteen, a beautiful, showy young woman, accomplished beyond the generality of her sex, but proud and unbending to the heart's core. The lessons of the religious had failed to teach her humility of spirit, or to grace her character with any of those virtues which make a woman pure and lovable. Her lips remained sealed as to the story of her infancy, as they were in the days of her childhood. It was only the hours of delirium which had revealed what she had felt.

In future Margaret's actions alone shall speak for her. I will say a few words to you concerning Isabel.

She had grown up to be almost a woman without any pretension to beauty. Her mouth was too large, her nose too *retrossé* to be pretty, the upper lips not sufficiently short, and yet the face wins upon you; it is a countenance beaming with good nature and natural kindness, and at last you learn to love it the oftener you see it; and you will agree with me in the end, that the face which possesses and charms your fancy in this way is far better than that which takes you by storm with its beauty.

As I am not one of those persons who believe in perfectly faultless characters, never having met with such a one, and not entertaining any belief in their existence, I shall describe Isabel to you in a way free from exaggeration as to terms.

By *nature* she was mild and gentle, and the antithesis was ever before her in the foster-sister, who, perhaps to try her own virtue, was ever near her for many years of her life. She was not, however, such an angel in human shape as not to writhe under, and sometimes even resent, the sarcastic taunts of the beautiful Margaret. Naturally meek-tempered, you will perceive she had less merit in turning away wrath with gentle words than if she had been prone to the contrary vice ; but opportunities were not wanting to her, and virtue and good-will helped her to bear and forbear where, without either the one or the other, she had fallen away.



CHAPTER XIII.

THE OLD, OLD TALE.



HE large, quaint old chateau at St. Germain was still tenanted by the two families, the Lady Florence and her husband, with their son and daughter-in-law. Between the two ladies the tenderest attachment had always subsisted, and the long and frequent absences of the Marshal and his son, both being in the French army, drew these ladies yet more closely together.

But the tie became still more tender after the death of Madame's husband, who fell as a brave soldier on the field of battle, and now, reft of both son and daughter, the affections of the Lady Florence were centred still more strongly on Madame and her children.

These two ladies lived in great retirement and privacy; therefore, it may readily be conceived that as time wore on and the eldest son of Madame St. John returned from his studies at St. Sulpice and declared his intention of entering the military profession, that the foster-sisters hailed his arrival with pleasure, as for a time at least the monotony of their lives would be broken.

Tall of stature, of dark complexion, and with a cast of features which seemed chiselled as those of a Grecian statue, Maurice St. John exhibited in his person the true type of manly beauty.

When the two damsels arrived home from the convent, Maurice was still at St. Sulpice. They remembered him only as the playmate of their childhood, but the case was altered now, and a certain sort of reserve and shyness must be mingled with aught that might remain of their former familiarity.

"Is it possible? Surely you are not the Margaret and Isabel I played with when a child," was the remark of Maurice as the black-eyed beauty tripped smilingly forward, whilst the more timid Isabel lingered beside his mother. "What a change the lapse of time has made!" he added, gazing admiringly on those whom he only remembered as children, but who had now sprung up into womanhood.

"But you forget how long that lapse of years has been," said Margaret. "If my memory be not treacherous, it is not less than ten years. We were but children when we parted."

Unquestionably, the return of the young man to his paternal home was the thing best calculated to rouse Margaret from the melancholy which seemed her normal state. Her proud heart had never forgotten the revelation of ten years since, and whenever honest Denis by any chance came in her way, when the Marshal happened to be at home, she felt a sore wound to her pride at the remembrance that *he*, a serving-man, had offered to adopt her.

You may readily conceive that Isabel was the favorite with the elder ladies of the chateau. Moreover, she was beloved by all who knew her. Again, she was the orphan child of a friend, and that consideration, united to her own good qualities, formed another strong link to bind the three together.

It would have well pleased the Lady St. John if, when her daughter-in-law occasionally took the damsels to spend a few weeks at the hotel of the Baron de Breteul, she could have seen her haughty *protégée* safely launched in honorable matrimony; but, as yet, she was simple Margaret Lindsey. If those she met were struck with her beauty, they were in no way enamored with her pride, or with the frivolity which, beguiling those who at times made their advances, coolly

threw them aside when a new face or a larger fortune appeared on the scene.

But the cold, proud, evil heart seemed after all to have a soft spot when the son of Madame St. John arrived at the chateau.

To see Margaret well married, to know that she had sobered down into a good and happy wife, would have given infinite pleasure to those who, if her wilfulness rendered love out of the question, had still her warmest interests at heart, but to see her enter their *own* family, to behold her become the bride of the eldest grandson of the Marshal, was not at all what they desired.

As to Margaret, she could when it pleased her skilfully conceal the dark traits in her character. She could even condescend to be civil to Isabel, humble to Lady Florene, and officially polite to the mother of one whom she wished to please.

With regard to Maurice himself, he was wholly engaged in preparations for his new career. At first his thoughts scarcely turned to the dangerous beauty in his path; eventually he found certain pleasure in her conversation, a tacit acknowledgment that she was the most lovely and accomplished woman he had ever met.

Endowed with every quality which would render a woman a devoted and affectionate wife, and with a heart susceptible of the most tender emotions, innocent and virtuous, Isabel had yielded up her heart unconsciously to herself.

"Can I wonder," she said to herself, as she beheld her pale face and irregular features reflected in the glass, "can I wonder that his fancy is caught by Margaret? She is as beautiful as I am the reverse, and far more talented and accomplished. My voice is weak and ineffectual, and I behold him entranced as her rich contralto resounds in his

ears. She is so witty, too, though, alas! the playfulness of her wit, as she terms it, comes too often liked a barbed arrow to my soul, for it veils some cutting sarcasm on my lack of genius or my homely face. Ah, well! ah, well! good Dame Agatha," she added, with a weary sigh, "you used to tell me I was proud and sensitive, and so I am. I must try and be very brave and hide what I suffer, and hope, if she does marry him, that she will make him a good wife, and that, in the wise decrees of God, all will be for the best."

There were tears in her deep blue eyes as she spoke, and she dashed them hastily aside as if ashamed of the momentary weakness.

There is such a thing as for man, and woman too, to be dazzled by appearances, and thus to mistake worthless dross for the solid ore, for all is not gold that glitters; and so it had happened that Maurice St. John had felt an attraction for the meretricious charms of Margaret, whilst Isabel had been passed by.

His mother observed nothing, but the Lady St. John was more sharp-sighted; she had her eyes, and ears too, always open. The Lady Florenee was now fast sinking into years, but she still preserved in a remarkable degree those charms which, at the epoch of the Revolution, had won for her the soubriquet of the Rose of St. Germain, first conferred upon her by that courtly monarch, Louis the Fourteenth. In the court of Mary, wife of William the Third, the "O'Neill" had been equally celebrated for her beauty, and few who looked on the still handsome and elegant woman could realize the fact that she was really the grandmother of Maurice St. John.

It was with a feeling of intense satisfaction that, a few weeks later, the Lady received the Marshal's announcement that within a month Maurice must accompany him to the

Netherlands: Lady St. John was cognizant of Isabel's secret, jealously as she thought she had guarded it, yet, thinking it well that the present aspect of things should be checked by the departure of Mauriee, she would have kept silence but for a few words expressive of admiration of the character of Isabel which fell from his lips the night previous to his departure.

Dazzled indeed he had been for a time, even as she had bewitched others by her wondrous beauty and her wit and talents, but his heart after awhile had turned where the Lady St. John and his mother most desired, to the gentle Isabel, and with their sanction and that of the Marshal, she received his plighted troth on the eve of his departure:



CHAPTER XIV.

ON THE WATCH.

T was a chill night towards the end of September, the wind blew in fitful gusts around the old chateau in the valley, and the rain, which had fallen in drizzling showers throughout the day, now fell in that heavy, determined down-pour which always betokens a wet night. It was not quite dark; there was sufficient light to desery a female form making its way through the valley, bending ever and again beneath the heavy gale.

The towers of the palace on the summit above the vale, which had so long afforded a shelter for one of the most unfortunate of England's kings, loomed darkly in the distance. It was in that direction that the damsel in the vale wended her way.

There is a watcher at the library window of the chateau whose gaze is steadfastly fixed on the receding form in the distance. She hears the clock in the turret strike the half hour of six, and on her superbly handsome features there is an expression of intense hatred, mingled with wonder, and curiosity, and delight.

What has she seen? What has she beheld to make her remain away from the cheerful blaze of the wood fire shivering at the window, with the heavy curtain upraised with one hand, while the other is tightly clenched together?

I will tell you. In the distance, just as the female whom she has watched was about to turn down a path which would lead up an ascent to the palace above, she has descried a young man hastening forward to meet her; he has grasped her hand with affectionate warmth, and now she leans upon

his arm ; they walk on, and still there is light sufficient to distinguish them if they turn up the hill. Yes, she is correct in her idea, for after the lapse of two minutes they reappear, till at last the increasing darkness and the blinding storm hide them from her sight. Then the lady who has been watching these two persons lets the curtain fall into its place, and creeps away with a shiver to the cheery wood fire. There she sits with her hands folded the one over the other, her beautiful lips wreathed into a cruel, scornful smile ; the red flame lights up her features, but they are distorted with the reflection of the bad passions which vex and disturb her soul.

She expresses her thought aloud.

"I have watched her to-night," she says to herself ; "tomorrow I will do more than watch ; I will follow her. At last then I have her in my power ; at last I can show her up as she really is, the false hypocrite, who dared to compete with me for his affections. She has made a traitor of him with naught but a gentle manner and a pair of blue eyes ; but now I have her fast. What will my Lady St. John and Madame say when they shall hear of these nightly rambles in the wind and rain, and of their immaculate favorite's new acquaintance—Madame so rigorous in her notions that she would swoon at the idea of a maiden being out in the evening hour by herself ? What will he say too, he who so cruelly neglected me for that pale-faced minx ?"

Then she rose and walked up and down the spacious apartment ; long and narrow it was, and the flickering light of the wood fire played on the oaken roof and antique paneling of the walls.

She was restless and nervous, and after awhile again returned to her seat ; her countenance was as that of one possessed by the furies, and clenching her small hand, she exclaimed :

"I will destroy you, detested Isabel, even as I would crush a fly. Why was I, Margaret Lindsey, with my glorious intellect, my energetic mind, endowed with the power I feel that I possess of ability to grasp at once a difficulty where she and others of my feeble sex linger far behind, crawling on their way by dint of application such as fools alone need, and yet my evil destiny has decreed that *I* should be a cast away, the thing of charity, indebted to a mean serving-man that I was saved from death? Ah! better had I not been saved. Can I ever forget that *he* should to this day feel that *he*, in *his* charity, thought of bringing me up as *his* daughter forsooth? And then to *creep* through life with this Lady Florence and Madame, to follow in their monotonous, pious wake, to smother all my proud feelings and ambitious aspirings, to try and lead them to believe I am what I am not, to listen with at least an assumed air of patience to the Curé's admonitions—for he has a long head and is hard to deceive—it is much more than I can bear."

The whirlwind of passion that had shook her soul was for a few moments silenced, and tears trickled down her face. Only for a moment, however, did a shade of feminine softness assume its sway; she again rose and paced the room.

"Is this life always to last?" said she. "If so, I shall curse the day that the unhappy woman who brought me into the world gave me birth. Shall I ever know who she was?" she added, drawing the miniature from her bosom which her dead mother had hung round her infant neck. "You have lovely features," she exclaimed, apostrophizing the inanimate portrait. "Very lovely, but tame and gentle; not cast in the fiery mould of the unfortunate being you brought into the world. I could fancy *you*, with your fair hair and blue eyes, had rather been the mother of that detested Isa-

bel, and should have thought myself a changeling, but that nurse's evidence would dispel the flattering illusion."

Then, with a weary sigh, she replaced the miniature in the folds of her dress and sat her down again. Her tears, those mute evidences of womanly weakness, had passed away, and a bitter smile, arising from a thought that flitted across her mind, played on her beautiful face.

"Yes," she said, "I will let him know, by means of an anonymous letter, what her occupation is, and thus I will bring the truant back to myself. If I become his wife I can shake off my thraldom to these women, and, above all, I shall make her suffer who has lorded it over me all my life, she, the child of one of their own friends, whom they believe to possess all the virtues under the sun."

Again her meditations were disturbed by the clock in the turret striking the hour of eight.

"Eight o'clock, and not yet back," she said. "It is all as it should be. I shall hold my peace and not even speak to Mistress Grace till I shall have watched my young lady to-morrow night; perhaps I will keep it to myself altogether and not even send an anonymous letter to Maurice."

Suddenly the door of the library was opened, and the object of her vindictive hate entered the library. Her face was very pale, she looked weary and fatigued, and her swollen cyclids betrayed that she had shed many tears.

"Bless me, child, where *have* you been all this long time," said Margaret, rousing herself for an onslaught. "It is not kind to leave me so much alone in the absence of our idolized mistresses. I am sure I really feel moped to death in this gloomy old place, with its dismal closets big enough in all conscience for sleeping apartments; its spacious corridors echoing back the sound of one's own footsteps; its heavy oaken panellings; its dry moat and gloomy

avenue; with the wind piping a requiem to the decayed and fading hopes of two luckless damsels whose hapless lot it is to be done to death with ennui in the dreary old place."

"Oh, my beautiful Margaret, what strange things you do say," said Isabel, placing herself on a small footstool near the fire, and holding out her cold hands in order to warm them by its cheery blaze. "I shall be very glad when the visit of the family to the Scottish home of Lord Balmerino is at an end, for our home is dull without them. But, I beg pardon, dear, I differ with you on two points."

Isabel's face was turned a little aside, but she was so near to her false foster-sister that the latter could see every change in her countenance that her own words might evoke. How little did Isabel know that Margaret's eyes had watched her in the valley two hours since, or that she was now under the domination of a fierce enemy.

"And pray, my dear Isabel," and the tones of Margaret's voice lingered with a slightly sarcastic inflexion on the term of womanly endearment, "in what way may I be so extremely unfortunate as to differ with your amiable and accomplished self?"

"Do not speak so satirically, dear Margaret. You well know I am not half so clever and accomplished as yourself. I only meant to say that the dear Lady Florenee and Madame St. John can scarcely be termed our mistresses; they are rather as most dear mothers in our regard, seeing we were adopted by the Lady St. John in the years of our helpless infancy; and as to the chateau, Margaret, it is only like all other quaint old houses of its kind, dull enough at this dreary autumn season, and doubly so on account of the absence of its good owners; but it has its beauties, love, for those who like antiquity and fine scenery, and to me it is a grand, dear old place, the only home I have ever known, and"—

"When you have done with your long preamble perhaps you will allow me to speak."

"Margaret, have I offended you in anything I have said?" and as Isabel spoke she looked up wonderingly at her companion. She had shaded her face with her hands, so that the cold, cruel expression of her countenance escaped Isabel's observation.

"It is scarcely worth while to differ with you on *every* point; but our views and feelings are so widely dissimilar that you would not understand me. But I should like an answer to *one* question. We are both women, no longer even in our girlhood, seeing we have each passed our twentieth year. Is it possible that you have never felt an aspiration beyond that which may be centered beneath the roof of this tumble-down old chateau? that you have never entertained a sentiment of affection beyond those who so graciously and condescendingly protected those infantile years you have alluded to so prettily? that you have never harbored a desire or undertaken anyfeat without the knowledge of these benefactresses?"

For a moment there was a dead silence between the two young women. Isabel knew, though she did not see, for she never raised her head, that the pitiless eyes of her foster-sister were bent searchingly upon her; that she was in fact being subjected to a sort of cross-examination, at which, gentle as she was, she felt no small indignation.

"You are not my confessor, Margaret. It is not fair to try to wring from me my most secret thoughts."

"Humble, patient Isabel, with whom all is as it should and ought to be, at least *seemingly* so, you, too, have some aspirations then, for you as good as own such to be the case by your evasive answers, and your secrets also, doubtless. You are not intellectual, or imaginative, or talented, or

beautiful; you have said as much yourself; therefore it cannot vex you for me to lay the case plainly before you, even if it should hurt yourself, love. Then, your incomparable virtue will no doubt lead you to thank me for enabling you to practise humility. The lapse of time, however, will show what your lips will not disclose, much as you affect contentment with your lot."

"I do not affect what I do not feel," said Isabel, rising and pressing her hand across her forehead, while tears streamed in torrents from her eyes. "You are cruel and unjust, Margaret, in your intercourse with me."

If eyes had power to slay, Isabel would have fallen a victim to the hatred of her proud and vindictive Scottish foster-sister.

"You *do* affect a happiness you do not feel. You hypocritically impose on Lady St. John and her daughter-in-law by assuming a virtue you are very far from possessing. But it is really beneath me to expostulate or argue with you."

As Margaret uttered these words she rose from the low ottoman on which she had reclined, and lighting a taper from one of the wax candles on the table, she cast a look of ineffable disdain on her foster-sister, and swept out of the room.

For a few moments after Margaret's departure Isabel stood as one bewildered, then she sat her down in the place her arch-enemy had vacated, and remained for some time buried in thought.

"Is it possible," she said at length, "that Margaret has discovered my visits to the palace, and that her proud and angry feelings are excited because I have a secret of my own? Alas! for myself and for him I try to serve, if that be the case. That Lady St. John would not approve of what I have done is more than likely, and that my lips,

sealed as they are to secersty, makes my position yet harder, is too true. That I haye been so unhappy as to cross Margaret in her attachment for Maurice is, I feel convineed, the case. I am out of spirits, out of heart, and I fear her very much, she is so cruel, so proud, and seems animated with a positive ill-feeling towards me. *He* will wonder if I do not meet him as usual, but I must be very wary now and not see him again for some time to come."

The wood fire had nearly burned itself out, the white, smouldering embers alone remained, when the clock striking the hour of midnight roused her from her reverie.



CHAPTER XV.

CAUGHT IN THE SNARE.

THREE weeks I have watched her movements closely, and she has managed to foil me. I will not allow her to escape me to-night," said Margaret, as she concealed a hood and cloak in the library, the lengthened absence of Isabel from that apartment one evening leading her to think she should find the articles in question useful.

Margaret had not reckoned wrongfully; her patience had exceeded that of Isabel.

Three weeks had passed and the young lady, Margaret well knew, had not left the chateau, and at last began to think her enemy was not on the alert.

But hatred never sleeps, suspicion once aroused never slumbers, especially if one *wishes* to be right in their calculations.

On the night in question, Margaret observed that when the clock struck the half hour of five Isabel left the library. She, too, quitted it, in order to get her hood and cloak and secrete them, as I have already said.

But she did not, after a long, weary watch at the window, observe Isabel pass along the valley as before; but, confident that she had left the chateau, she went to the sleeping apartment of the latter and knocked at the door.

And as she expected, there was no answer; so she opened the door and entered the room, in order to satisfy herself that her foster-sister was really absent.

There was a small inner room, used by Isabel as a sort of boudoir, in which she was accustomed to read and work, and in order to satisfy herself that she was not there, as she

might have failed to hear the knock at the door of the outer room, Margaret crossed through to the boudoir.

It was vacant.

The needle-work on which Isabel had been engaged seemed to have been hastily thrown on a chair without regard to the neatness which generally led her to fold it up and lay it aside till her return, and she was leaving the boudoir, resolved, come what would of her enterprise, to dog her steps, when the end of a small three-cornered note, peeping out from the leaves of a book in which it had evidently been purposely placed, attracted her attention.

The next moment the note was in the hands of Margaret, and unfolding it, she read the following words :

" DEAREST ISABEL :

" I beg you, by our common love for each other, not to neglect to meet me this evening. Oh! my love, you know not what I have suffered during the time that has elapsed since last we met. I will await your coming as usual at the right angle from the valley, where it turns off to the hill. Let me beseech you not to disappoint me, my own dear Isabel.

" P. S.—As the evenings are closing in very rapidly, I will be at the foot of the hill at six o'clock."

" Audacious, consummate hypocrite!" said Margaret, folding up the note very carefully and returning it, not to its former place, but to her own pocket-book, " I have found you out at last, then. Before I have done with you, Lady St. John, and her daughter-in-law, too, shall acknowledge you the hypocrite I know you to be. You will not dare ask for this note, which I will transfer to my own keeping. No signature either. All very carefully arranged, no doubt, but not carefully enough for me, after all. But now, Mistress Isabel, I must be on your track, and quickly too, for you have evidently got the start of me by a good twenty minutes."

Margaret then hastened to the library, arrayed herself in her hood and cloak, and listening, in order to ascertain that the domestics were in the servants' hall, she let herself out, in the same way that Isabel had probably done before her, through a glass door which led from the breakfast room into a large, old-fashioned garden which ran round two sides of the chateau.

The moon was up, but it only shone out at intervals from behind a mass of clouds; but Margaret knew the way well; she could have walked it blindfold; and passing with a rapid step along the green sward, lest her step on the gravel walk should attract attention, she quickly found herself at a gate which gave egress to the valley.

Cautiously, but yet swiftly, the damsel wended her way till she came to that angle leading up to the hill, mentioned in the letter she had read as the place of meeting, and by turning a corner of which you could ascend the hill leading straight to the Palace of St. Germain.

Here she paused, convinced that she heard the murmur of voices, though she could see no one, and for a few moments she was wholly at fault as to what step she should next take. She had chosen the shelter of some overhanging trees in a thicket that bordered the hillside as a place of concealment, and through a sudden break in the clouds, the light of the moon, partially obscured though it still was, revealed to her the full extent of the road up to the very summit of the hill crowned by the palace.

Within a hundred paces of her place of concealment, Margaret distinctly saw approaching towards her her detested foster-sister leaning on the arm of a man perhaps some thirty years of age; he was somewhat negligently attired, but after the fashion worn by gentlemen of the period, and had rather more of the manner of an Englishman about him

than Frenchman; his personal appearance was prepossessing; he was well formed, tall of stature, and fair complexioned.

Margaret could almost hear the pulsations of her heart as she stood, or rather crouched, beneath the sheltering trees by the hillside, as gradually, by their nearer approach, the voices, hitherto low and indistinct, the murmur of which had only reached her, now fell upon her ear loud enough for her to distinguish what was said, with the loss of only a word or two occasionally.

"How much longer will they be absent, Isabel?"

"I cannot tell you; perhaps a month, perhaps more."

"I must not meet them; of that, love, you are quite aware."

"What can I do? Oh, what *can* I do?" was the reply of Isabel, whose voice was evidently choked by her sobs.
"My lips are sealed; a vow is on them which I dare not break."

Then the stranger said something in a very low voice, the purport of which did not reach Margaret's ears; but whatever it may have been, the anguish of Isabel increased, and she beheld her tear from her neck a small gold cross which she always wore, and which was adorned with diamonds, the gift of the Marshal to herself, and which she placed in the hand of her companion, who, passing his arm round her waist, laid her head on his shoulder and kissed her brow.

The two had now reached the bottom of the hill; one movement on the part of Margaret would have betrayed her presence, as she thus crouched beneath the underwood, so close that by raising her hand she might have touched the hem of her foster-sister's dress.

"Farewell," said the latter, in a voice broken by her tears; "farewell till I can steal from home for another of

these nocturnal meetings. Alas, alas! my path is full of difficulties. I cannot desert you; if I did my very heart would break; but what would they think, what would they say, if—if”—

Again Margaret lost the words that followed; they were breathed out in a whisper, as if they might not even be uttered aloud, though she knew not any one was at hand to catch their sense; and even that whisper was stifled by her sobs.

“No, fear nothing, my love, my Isabel; fear nothing, for *you* have done no wrong.”

“Yes, but virtue may bear the semblance of vice, and if”—

Again a pause.

“No harm *can* or *shall* befall you. Once let me get to England and I will write to them, but now—at present betrayal would”—

“Fear not. I will faithfully keep my vow. My lips shall never disclose, as I hope for happiness hereafter, the secret you have entrusted to me.”

“My own dear Isabel, I know not how to leave you in the state to which I, in my desperation, have reduced you; bear up, love, for my sake. Allow me to accompany you to the garden-gate at the end of the valley.”

“By no means. I shall be at home in a few minutes. Farewell, till we meet again.”

“Trust in God, my own love, for yourself, if not for me. Time will seem like an age till our next meeting. I will write as usual; you know where to look for my letters. Adieu, Isabel, once more.”

A moment and the two had parted. She, swift of foot, fled down the valley like an affrighted fawn; he lingered and then wandered on, as if irresolute whether to follow her

footsteps or not; but, finally, he retraced his steps and wended his way up the hill.

Then Margaret arose from her painful, half-recumbent position, shook the dank dews from her dress, and pursued her homeward way. She did not hasten, however, desiring not to tread too quickly in the footsteps of Isabel, yet advancing near enough to be at the chateau within two or three minutes of Isabel, so as to throw aside her cloak and hood and to seat herself, with a book in her hand, as if she had not been absent from home, by the time Isabel should enter the library.

"At length, then, fortune will make me some atonement for my outraged feelings, my wounded pride," said this baneful Margaret, as she took her usual seat in the huge chimney-corner. "To-morrow's post shall convey to *him* an anonymous letter. As to the Lady St. John and Madame, it will be time to enlighten them when they return home. How dared she step between me and *him*. Was it not enough that she should have the advantage of me as far as our birth was concerned? Was I to suffer in every way?"

"Revenge eats cold," says a rueful and bitter Eastern proverb, fitter for the children of an Oriental rather than a Christian clime; but the spirit of Margaret harmonized with the terrible idea.

"Miss Isabel is ill, and has sent me to tell you she shall not come down again to-night, Miss," said a young girl, who entered, followed by a man-servant, bearing a tray on which was a cold fowl, together with bread and wine.

"Very well, Julie. I shall not want you any more," said Margaret. "You can go to bed when you please. I have to write some letters, so do not let me be disturbed."

She took her meal alone, and then, with a glitter in her cruel eyes, she drew her writing implements before her and wrote as follows:

"A friend, who takes the warmest interest in the movements of Colonel St. John, implores him to be on his guard against the depraved Isabel Fitzgerald. The young lady is known to be in the habit of meeting a stranger, who is perfectly unknown to the family by whom she has been adopted, and these meetings have been held under the cover of evening at the foot of the hill leading to the royal chateau of St. Germain."

These lines were written in a feigned hand, and Margaret resolved to post them herself on the following morning. Amidst the fortunes of war, they never reached the hand of Maurice.

There were two lonely watchers in the old chateau that night; one was on her knees whilst the other was writing; her fair hair disordered, her eyes raining tears, she was praying to God for strength and patience; and when she laid her head on her pillow, it was for bodily rest indeed, but not for sleep; and when at last, after the clock had struck four, she sank into a disturbed slumber, her dreams were but the reflection of her waking thoughts.

She was again by the hillside with him who had become as it were the arbiter of her destiny; her heart was wrung with a tale of sorrow not unmixed with crime, and again her lips registered an oath that she would not betray him. Then the vision changed. She was alone in a wild mountainous country; beside her was a frightful precipice; beneath she heard the roar of many waters; above was the canopy of heaven, without a single star to illumine it; then she fancied she heard the voice of Margaret, and when she looked around, she beheld beside her Maurice; she felt herself about to fall into the abyss, and called on him to help her, but he turned away; whilst Margaret, extending her hand, pushed her into the yawning chasm beneath. She started up, awakened by the horror of the dream; big drops of perspiration were standing on her forehead.

"It is but a dream," she murmured to herself; but then she shuddered, for the dream had but typified her thoughts when awake.

"I was so happy till—till—oh, God, help me!" she said, as if she feared shaping her thoughts in words even to herself. "Above all else, help me, oh! my merciful Father, if *they* take from me their love. If Margaret should ever hold me in her power, if she be ignorant of this dread secret, though it may cast a gloom over my own life, it can injure me in no possible way; but if she discovers these stolen interviews, she, the foster-sister whom I fear, then I am indeed lost."

Another, too, kept watch—a watch of fiendish exultation at the thought that Isabel had some dread secret in her keeping not to be breathed even to her best friends. The tale she had to tell would go woefully against her, even with those who loved her most; for how could she account for having formed acquaintance with this strange man; how for being out by herself at night holding meetings by the lonely hillside; how satisfy those whose notions of female prudence and modesty were of the most rigorous description, as she had suffered her lips to be sealed by a solemn oath, which she had again ratified in the hearing of her arch-enemy.

Alas! alas! in this world, purity, innocence and worth are too often made to bear the penalty of sin.



CHAPTER XVI.

A MYSTERY.



VIL-DOERS grow bold when the lapse of time fails to bring detection, and virtue, when for some unfortunate reason it at times bears the semblance of vice, grows perhaps less nervous and sensitive under the course an unhappy train of circumstances may have led it to pursue.

The evening deepened as the year wore on, the trees had shed their yellow leaves and the dank dews of the November night fell heavily upon them as they lay in large soddened heaps in the valley, and the cold of the day had given place to a misty haze or fog, which veiled the towers of the neighboring palace from view. The old palace was, you will remember, situated on the brow of a hill. The Marshal's chateau was down in the valley, and it had been the abode of himself and his lady ever since the happy day on which their fortunes had been united.

From the windows of either building, glimmering like diamonds through the dark and misty night, lights might be seen, betokening that, though the royal exiled race of England were no longer sheltered beneath the roof of the palace, and that the family of the Marshal were still absent, nevertheless both the palace on the height and the chateau in the valley were alike occupied.

Through the fog of the November night, a tall and slender form passes rapidly along, heavy sighs again and again breaking the dead stillness that reigned around. Occasionally, Isabel, for she it is, pauses and listens, fancying her steps are dogged; then she looks around, but can discern nothing through the misty night save the twinkling lights

gleaming in the distance on either side, and a sigh of relief burst forth.

"It was but a false alarm," says she to herself, "the echo of my own footsteps mayhap, but so like the steps of a person close beside me that I felt almost paralyzed with fear."

Her surmises, however, were not incorrect. Her foster-sister, bold and courageous as she herself was timid, was close behind her, angry at being out in the cold, damp night, forgetful that her own evil passions, far above natural curiosity, urged her on.

Unlike her conduct on the former occasion when Margaret had tracked her steps, Isabel did not pause at the angle in the road leading to the hillside, but turned the corner and at once ascended the hill.

There was far more chance now that she might become aware of the presence of her female foe than when merely in the valley, for the road was broad and straight, and the overhanging branches of the trees, shorn as they were of their foliage, presented no hiding-place beside which she might lurk; and as it was far from the wishes of the damsels that Isabel should discover her proximity to herself, she slackened her pace, so as to increase the distance between them, yet not so as to stand the faintest chance of losing sight of her.

The hill was a good quarter of a mile in length, and it soon became apparent, from the steadfastness with which Isabel pursued her way, looking neither to right nor left, that she intended walking on till she reached the top.

But to Margaret's intense anxiety and astonishment, Isabel did not even then pause, but made her way to the very walls of the palace itself; then, indeed, she stood for a few moments as if irresolute, but at length gave three distinct raps with her knuckles on a side door opening into

a court-yard not very far from the principal entrance. In the utmost extremity of surprise and bewilderment, beautiful Margaret remained as it were petrified, wishful to see out the last act of the drama, in which, of her own perverse will, she was in a manner playing a part.

Fortunately a recess in the wall, not many paces distant, presented a place of concealment, otherwise, when the door at which Isabel had knocked should be opened, it was more than probable she would have been discovered; and she now drew stealthily aside and stood within the recess, awaiting anxiously as to what might follow.

The damp earth, covered with the last dead leaves of the closing year, rendered it the less likely that the sound of her footsteps would betray her presence, yet it was evident Isabel's quick sense of hearing, rendered yet more acute by the painful circumstances in which she had placed herself, was again on the alert, for as the small arched door was opened, evidently by some person on the watch to receive her, Margaret overheard her say:

"Thanks, good Jacques. I have been terribly frightened to-night. I have fancied I heard footsteps behind me, and even now, whilst I stood waiting at this door, it seemed to me that some person was close beside me."

As Isabel spoke she entered beneath the arched doorway. It was quickly closed, and Margaret could hear in the court-yard beyond the receding footsteps of her foster-sister and her conductor.

In no small anger at her plots being for this night foiled, she stood for a few moments irresolute as to the step she should next take; finally she yielded to her curiosity; she was aware that in order to prevent the chance of her temporary absence being discovered, the visit of Isabel to the palace could not be a long one, and she resolved to remain at her post and observe if she returned home alone.

In suspense and fear combined, for, courageous as she naturally was, Margaret did feel alarmed, not at all liking her lonely position, she nevertheless remained on watch. The minutes, however, lagged wearily along, and she breathed a sigh of inexpressible relief when, after the lapse of half an hour, the sound of footsteps, together with the murmur of voices, made her aware that Isabel was about to return. In a moment more the door was opened.

"Farewell, Jacques," she distinctly heard her foster-sister say. "I will be here again, then, in three nights from the present, unless *he* writes to the contrary. He says he hopes to embark for England in a week at most."

"I hope so, Madam, if only for your sake, for these visits cannot but be full of danger to you. I shall come down the hill with you, Madam."

"I think not; he seems so ill, you had best return to him; yet everything is so dark and still, and the road down the hillside so lonely, that I had best accept your offer; you need not be long absent from him."

The next minute the door was closed, and through the rapidly-increasing mist, now becoming a heavy fog, Margaret could faintly discern the figures of her foster-sister and her companion as they proceeded, just a few paces in advance of her, towards the hillside. Stealing like a thief from his lair, the beautiful and crafty woman now cautiously emerged from her hiding-place, keeping just a little behind the two, and in no small uneasiness at the unforeseen circumstance of Isabel having a companion, aware that when he should leave her, whether at the foot of the hill or in the valley itself, he would be sure to confront herself on his return.

Her ready wit, however, devised a remedy, repugnant as she was to adopt the plan.

One side of the hill was skirted by a dry ditch, surmounted by a low bank, separating it from an adjoining field. The bed of this ditch was composed of heaps of dank leaves, rotting in the mists and damps of November ; could she but safely and noiselessly get into the ditch, she could in an instant climb the bank and creep stealthily along in the field on the other side till the man who accompanied Isabel should have returned.

In no small fear, she accomplished the undertaking without attracting their attention ; and she commended her precaution, for at the angle where the road turned into the valley, those whose steps she was dogging suddenly paused.

"No, I forbid you to come any farther," she heard Isabel say. "Once in the valley, and within a stone's-throw of the chateau, I no longer feel timid. It is well for me that the nights are dark, or these stolen meetings would long since have been discovered, and I pray God, most earnestly, that the necessity which lends me to grant them may soon pass away."

"Mademoiselle knows Jaeques' feelings on the subject," replied the man. "I will now wish you good-night, as you do not wish me to conduct you farther."

The stranger then took his leave, Isabel swiftly wending her way homewards. Her companion, evidently a man of a class inferior to her, lingered for a moment as if half uncertain whether to disregard her prohibition and follow her in spite of it, as he took a few steps down the valley, but finally returned. Margaret listened till the sound of his retreating footsteps was lost in the distance, and then, issuing from her place of concealment, she hastened in the direction of the chateau.

With the eagerness of a cat watching its prey, Margaret had long regarded all Isabel's movements with the greatest

anxiety; above all, she desired to discover the channel through which her foster-sister maintained this secret correspondence.

It had long been Isabel's custom to go at an early hour twice a week to the cottage of a blind and aged woman who was one of the recipients of the bounty of Lady St. John, to read to her, talk to her, and comfort her under her trials, and Margaret determined to follow her thither the next morning, being under the impression that, in some way, this woman was worked up with the mystery she was bent on unravelling.

As usual, Isabel started on her customary errand, bearing in her hand a small basket containing some little delicacies she had put together for the blind woman's use, whilst Margaret followed in the distance, reading a book as she walked slowly on, in order, should Isabel chance to turn round, that she might be able to appear perfectly indifferent, for she meant to enter the cottage after her as if by chance, or, should fortune favor, to reach the old woman's unperceived by Isabel; even to play the eaves-dropper, could she gain the information she sought in no other way.

To her surprise, however, Isabel did not turn as she expected down a road to the right, some distance beyond the angle in the valley which branched off to the hillside, but made straight towards a thicket bordered with oak and chesnut trees, the overhanging branches of which, interlacing themselves with those which grew on the other side of the road, formed a grove, and offered a pleasant retreat in the hot summer days to the inmates of the chateau. Within the thicket itself Isabel now turned, and as Margaret stood anxiously peering round the angle by the hillside, she could hear the crackling of the withered branches as Isabel trod them under foot, and then she beheld her pause before an

aged oak, put her hand within a yawning chasm in the trunk of the tree and draw something forth which she hastily concealed in her bosom.

Then she turned quickly away, and retraced her steps till she came to the road leading to the blind woman's cottage.

Having thus, she was quite convinced, made the discovery of what she so much desired to know, Margaret did not trouble herself any more about her foster-sister's movements that day, but returned home, blithe and gladsome at the thought that she had added another most important link to the chain of evidence she was so industriously collecting together, by which Isabel's reputation would forever be ruined in the eyes of her protectors and of Maurice St. John.

On the same evening on which Margaret had for the second time played the spy on the actions of her foster-sister, the latter had made a long and fruitless search for the note which Margaret had abstracted from the leaves of the volume in which Isabel had thoughtlessly placed it.

Her first duties of the day discharged, she had withdrawn to the boudoir which the kindness of Lady St. John had assigned to her use, and remembering that she had forgotten to destroy the letter in question, she opened the book, which apparently remained as she had left it, for the purpose of doing so.

In a moment she divined her loss, and, mechanically, with a pale face and cold and trembling fingers, she turned over the leaves again and again with the vain hope of finding it; then, scarce knowing what she was about, she ransacked all possible and impossible places in the narrow range of her chamber and boudoir in search of so important a document, and at length, after the lapse of two hours, realized the terrible fact that the letter had been abstracted from the place in which she had so incautiously deposited it.

It required no great discernment to make her aware that Margaret, and none other, had purloined a paper the possession of which would prove destructive to her character even in the eyes of her dearest friends ; and bitterly reproaching herself for her want of prudence, she endeavored to school her features into an expression of calmness she was far from feeling interiorly.

Mingled with the distress, too, which she experienced at the loss of this little billet, was the consciousness that, in all human probability, every one of her movements had been watched ; movements, respecting which, those who loved her best must, of a necessity, hold her guilty, seeing that by a perhaps rash oath her lips were sealed to secrecy.

On the morning to which I have alluded, when Margaret watched her take a letter from the trunk of the old oak, she hastened home, after having visited the blind woman, shut herself in her room, and perused the note ; it ran as follows :

"DEAREST ISABEL:

"I write these lines from a sick bed. It is, unfortunately, quite impossible for me to return to England, and, in the present juncture of affairs, and in the danger which would inevitably result to me if my whereabouts were discovered, I have accepted the offer of my man Jacques and removed to the dwelling of his parents, honest people, but very poor, and ill able to afford the attention I really require. I am, indeed, so reduced as to be obliged to avail myself of the promise you made to come to my assistance, as far as you possibly could, when I required help. Jacques will await your coming this evening at the customary spot. Do not fail to meet him. As you love me, prove yourself true and faithful, my beloved Isabel, and convey to my trusty valet whatever help you can afford me."

For a few moments after the perusal of an epistle which, much as she strove to conceal the fact from herself, betrayed the cold, calculating spirit of its writer, Isabel sat with her eyes still fixed on those lines, and a world of misery in her

gaze ; then she arose, clasped her hands together, and paced the room as one laboring under great mental excitement.

" Does he really care for me," she said, half aloud, " does he really love me as he has protested he does, and, at the same time, pen a letter which he knows must cause me pain ? Alas ! alas ! what shall I do ? I have expended in six weeks the handsome allowance the Lady St. John makes me for half a year, the presents of valuable jewelry the good Marshal has given me have gone in the same way, perhaps never to be returned to me. What can I do now ? to grant what he asks is torture, and yet I cannot refuse ; and then this awful vow which seals my lips, and Margaret, perhaps, aware of my stolen meetings. I cannot seek the good Curé, I cannot pour my sorrows in the ear of dear old Grace ; Mauriee I never hear from, alas ! perhaps he has already learned a lesson of suspicion from Margaret. Oh, my God ! what shall I do, how shall I bear this trouble ?" As Isabel uttered the last words, she sank into a seat, and burying her face in her hands, she wept long and bitterly.

" It was *her* gift," she said, at length, " but, like all that has preceded it, it must go, and perhaps I am selfish, perhaps I should be glad that, at any personal cost, I can relieve his sufferings." Then opening a small, antique casket, she took from thence a bracelet, richly set with diamonds and emeralds, and carefully placing it in a small case, she took up her pen and wrote the following note :

" I would that I could satisfy the longing desires of my heart and send you sufficient to sustain you under your present misfortunes, not the least of which is your present illness, for it detains you in a spot fraught with danger. Money I have none, but I send you, by the hand of Jacques, the last and most treasured, of the costly baubles the love of my benefactress has bestowed on me, and I conjure you, my dear ——, on no account to part wholly with it. It is yours, for the present exigency, only to raise a loan

upon. I repeat the words you said when I gave you the other trinkets. I have reserved but those of small value, dreading to excite suspicion should I part with all.

"I seem to be tottering on the verge of a precipice, into the depths of which I may be at any moment hurled, and long for the moment of your departure from France; remember, I do not overrate the trouble which will fall on me should my stolen meetings with you be discovered. Such an event is more than possible, as, through an act of imprudence on my part, having merely concealed it within the leaves of a book, I have lost the last letter you sent me. Acknowledge the receipt of this letter and package immediately. I shall look in the customary place to-morrow for your reply. Let me beseech you not to linger in France a moment more than is absolutely necessary.

"Your very affectionate,

"I. F."



CHAPTER XVII.

ON the morning of the following day, whilst Margaret was yet lingering at the toilet table, Isabel hastened to the hollow oak, the repository of this most dangerous correspondence, having the previous night entrusted her most cherished souvenir, one of the many mementoes of Lady St. John's affection to herself, to the care of Jacques. In the trunk of the tree she found, as she expected, a letter, and it being one of the days on which it was her wont to visit the blind woman, she returned at once to the chateau, and in the privacy of her own apartment she read as follows:

"I hasten, my beloved ——, to thank you for the package which Jaques has just delivered to me. Do not fear that I shall part with your trinket irretrievably; it will merely remain in the custody of a Jew money-lender, residing in Paris, till I am able to redeem it. Of course, the little you have it in your power to do for me, and my own utter want of funds, is one of the chief causes of my remaining in a spot so full of danger. Think, dearest, is it absolutely impossible for you to devise some plan by which you could once and for all obviate this difficulty, and by obtaining for me about one thousand francs once and for all help me out of my dilemma?

"The perusal of your letter both grieves and annoys me. It grieves me to see how much I distress you, and it annoys me, because I cannot divest myself of the idea that you value the possession of your trinkets so as to feel distressed at allowing me the temporary use of them. Let me remind you that she who loves perfectly knows fear but by name; fear is known only to selfish souls.

"The want of funds alone detains me in this detested place wherein I am doomed to vegetate against my will.

"Keep up your courage. Remember, even should your intercourse with me ooze out and injure you in the estimation of those with whom you live, your trouble will not last long, only till I write you from England. Till then, I charge you to keep sacred the promise you have solemnly made before heaven not to reveal my name."

With mingled feelings of fear, indignation and outraged love Isabel read and re-read the contents of this precious missive. "Selfish, ungrateful," burst from her lips again and again, as her spirit rose at the coolness with which the writer treated her fear of discovery, and the evident selfishness which he exhibited.

"Heaven support me, what shall I do?" said she, pressing her hands on her throbbing temples, "oh, this dreadful vow wherewith my lips are sealed; and yet, were there no sin in breaking it, would I dare to speak and have his blood upon my soul? Ah, indeed, indeed, there is nothing left for me but to suffer and endure."

But poor Isabel was no philosopher, nay, she was even wanting in the first and most necessary of Christian virtues, patience; and now a perfect whirlwind of fear and grief swept over her soul, and tears were raining down her face, when she was startled by the voice of one whom she tenderly loved at her chamber door, asking admittance. Sympathy she could not seek, for her lips must be sealed as to the cause of her sorrow; to attempt to conceal her tears was equally vain, and she was fain to bid Grace enter, and to hope that her old friend would ask no questions.

"I have such good news, dear child," said the aged dame, as she entered the room and seated herself beside Isabel, "the Marshal and the rest of the family leave Scotland to-morrow. It makes me quite blithe to think they will all be back soon. Mr. Edward, too, who has been spending some time at Lord Balmerino's, will come with them, so that we shall have quite a merry gathering for Christmas; but, my bonny bird, have you not a word to say in return for my good news?" and poor old Grace bent her eyes, bright as of yore in spite of her years, on Isabel's tearful face.

There was pity, love and wonderment in that gaze, which Isabel did not return, for her eyes were cast down ; she answered never a word, but her pallid face and evident confusion increased the bewilderment of Graec.

" My dearest and best-loved child, tell your poor old friend, who has always loved you as if you were her own, what it is that preys on your mind and makes you so unhappy ? "

" It is all nothing, dear Graec," was the reply, and Isabel nervously pushed back the shower of golden curls which had fallen on her neck and shoulders, and made an effort to drive back the tears from her eyes. " I am very *triste* sometimes, you know. And so the Lady Florenee and Madame St. John are coming back at last ? "

" But, my dear child, you are not *triste* for nothing, confide in me ; believe me, Isabel, I have grieved to see you so sad and dejected ; your step is heavy and your voice is still, instead of carolling as blithe as any bird. Are you not glad dear Lady Florenee is coming back to us ? "

" I *should* be glad, Graec, should I not ? " stammered forth Isabel, a deep flush dyeing her face and neck, for well she knew that the return of the family to St. Germains, with that seal upon her lips, would only increase her unhappiness.

" Surely my birdie should be glad ; has not my Lady Florenee been more than a mother to you ? " and here Graec paused and marveled more than ever at her favorite's strange words and absent manner.

" How many days, think you, will pass before they return ? "

" Probably before this day week."

" Less than a week ; that will soon slip away."

Graec started at the strange, undefinable expression which flitted across the face of her favorite. She could not divest

her mind of the idea that, for some hidden cause, Isabel regretted the return of the family to the chateau, and a shadow passed over her aged face at the thought of the joy testified by Margaret, whose face had beamed with pleasure when she had told her the contents of the letter she had that morning received from Scotland, and contrasted it with the sadness and mystery by which Isabel was surrounded.

"My bonny birdie," said the old lady, after a pause, "you have something on your mind, that I can plainly see, but I will not press you into a confidence which, mayhap, should be reserved for Lady Florene alone," and having, for a moment, folded her in her arms, Isabel giving vent to a weary sigh, she left the room without another word.

But alone in her chamber, the usually sharp, penetrating mind of Grace Wilmot was absorbed in thought.

"Strange," she muttered to herself, "the dispositions of these two damsels seem altogether reversed, she who once was all candor, and good temper and content appears to have changed places with Margaret and to have adopted her former morose and haughty conduct. I have noticed a change these last six weeks and am very glad the family are coming back; truly, it seems as if a glamour were cast over the girls. Margaret and Isabel have changed places, for all Margaret's cold and proud reserve has passed away to her foster-sister."

Poor old Grace! how little did she know that Margaret's unbounded joy arose from the exultation she felt that Isabel was wholly in her power, that at last Dame Fortune, as she said to herself, was making compensation for the miseries attendant on her birth, which had thrown her on the bounty of the Marshal and his lady, and that the circumstances of which she had become acquainted were certain to degrade and lower Isabel in the esteem of her friends, and would probably end in exactly reversing their positions, for with

such a shadow over her how could she ever become the bride of Maurice.

On the next morning Margaret turned her steps to the old oak tree, just half an hour before the time at which Isabel was in the habit of visiting the blind woman.

Within a small cavity in the hollow of the tree there was a little heap of withered leaves ; she moved them aside—a sealed letter lay beneath them.

She clutched it as greedily as a miser does his gold, and returned home by a circuitous route in order to avoid encountering Isabel. As soon as she had reached her own room she locked the door, tore open the letter, and read as follows :

“ BELOVED —— :

“ I implore you to meet me to-night without fail. Jacques tells me he has heard a certain party are expected home in a few days. We must arrange matters for a speedy flight ere that takes place.

“ Your devoted ——.”

Margaret Lindsey's youthful charms had developed ; she was now a superbly beautiful woman ; her handsome face was radiant with happiness ; her eyes sparkled with the delight she really felt when she entered the apartment appointed for common use when the young ladies were not in their own rooms.

It was also destined for Grace, but her increasing age and infirmities rarely allowed her to leave her own chamber.

Isabel was already seated, sad and sorrowful, affecting to read, but her thoughts wandered far away, and she made a faint attempt to reply with spirit when her tormentor addressed her with some sarcastic observation, and then again relapsed into silence.

To add to what she had formerly endured, a sharp pang seized her heart on finding no letter in the customary place, combined with a fear lest she had been watched and the letter removed ere she arrived,

"I am consumed with *ennui*, Mrs. Wilmot," said Margaret, when Grace entered the apartment. "Really, Isabel, who used to have such a fine flow of spirits, is now so sad and taciturn that I cannot get a word out of her. I am sure," she added, with a light, provoking laugh, "the Ladies St. John will charge me with having set her a bad example, seeing they always used to be severe on me for what they were pleased to term sullenness and discontent; has some elfin sprite, think you, changed us in the night? I sometimes ask myself if I am really Margaret and if she be Isabel, she has grown so pale, and sad, and silent, and I—well, the very tenor of my life is changed; I feel as happy as a little bird."

"Your foster-sister is not well, Miss Margaret. She will be as of old when old times return, as they will full soon, please God," said Grace, her keen eyes riveted on the face of Isabel, now ghastly as death, and then flushed to the deepest crimson.

"Old times!" retorted beautiful Margaret, scornfully. "Those old times you allude to, Mistress Wilmot, will never return to Isabel or myself. Mayhap I may be the gainer by her loss. I may seem to speak in enigmas, but time will show, time will show, and"—

The proud beauty, with eyes flashing fire, had risen from her seat, and was about to leave the room, when her yet unfinished speech was brought suddenly to an end by a heavy fall. The unfortunate Isabel had sunk senseless on the ground.

It was very long ere she recovered her senses, and whilst nurse and Grace were occupied in endeavoring to restore suspended animation, Margaret stood idly by, a cold, sarcastic smile on her beautiful lips, a cruel glitter in her eyes as she bent them pitilessly on the still unconscious Isabel.

"My pretty colleen, it is ill she has been of late, sure, and it is my Lady Florence who will be setting things right, Mistress Wilmot," said the still buxom and comely wife of the worthy Denis.

"Lady St. John," retorted Margaret, "will be surprised at much that has taken place since her departure. It is time that Isabel, the favored one of the whole household, should be watched by careful eyes."

As she spoke, she swept out of the room, leaving Grace and nurse at a loss to understand the meaning of her words.

"Margaret Lindsey hath an undisciplined heart; she is a proud, imperious woman. As she was when a child, this poor Isabel has always been the object of her dislike," said Grace. "But see, she is reviving. Nurse, let us place her on the sofa."

Pleading illness after her recovery from the swoon into which she had fallen, Isabel kept in her own room during the rest of the day and that which succeeded it. On the morning of the following day she rose as usual, visited the blind woman, notwithstanding the entreaties of Grace that she would not expose herself to the cold and damp, and on her way thither found in the customary place a letter expositulating with her on account of her silence, and expressing astonishment that she had not met the writer agreeably to the request contained in his last.

"I am better in health," thus ran the letter, "but not well enough to travel. I must not incur the slightest chance of encountering Maurice, or indeed any of the family. Try and help me yet again, and in a very short time I hope to be far away, and shall be able to release you from your present obligation of secrecy."

"The last time, the *very* last time," sighed she to herself, after she had read the letter. "Yes, I will leave nothing

undone to save him. I have gone too far to reeede. One meeting more or less matters not. I will look upon his face again before nightfall."

Thus, when the short winter afternoon had faded away, and Margaret had retired to the library, Isabel hastened on her ill-advised expedition, and once again stood by the hill-side, awaiting the coming of one who was to be her fate.

One moment she lingers by the hillside, and by the light of the moonbeams other eyes than those of Isabel scanned the appearance of the stranger narrowly. He was pale, as if recovering from recent illness; he wore his arm in a sling; his features were decidedly handsome, but their beauty was marred by a sinister expression.

" You are come then, dearest, to meet me once again," he said, passing his arm tenderly around her waist, and kissing her upturned face. " I rejoice, my Isabel, for it may be the last time for a very long while. And now, love, what can you do for me yet more to help me out of the desperate trouble I have fallen into; above all to help me to England, as I have little doubt but that I shall be able to get away in a few days."

" Alas! alas! I can do nothing beyond that which may still help you for the present;" and as Isabel spoke the wicked eyes which peered through the trees beheld her place a very small package in the stranger's hand.

" It was no doubt a trinket," thought the owner of the eyes, for the reply was, as he glaneed carelessly, nay scornfully, at what he had received:

" Really, this is child's play, my love; some fifty franes perehanee it may producee from that avarieious old usurer, Levi, and the old trouble goes on still and all your woman's gew-gaws parted with. How much better it would be if you would but condescend to take the step I advised when I was

lying *perdu* up yonder," and he pointed with his walking-stick to the towers of the palace on the brow of the hill; "I could soon have returned you the amount, and both my trouble and your own would the sooner be over."

With an emotion of horror, Isabel shrank from the stranger as he spoke those words I have recorded, which had failed to reach the curious ears of one who had bent forward farther than prudence had warranted.

"Never, never," said Isabel. "Whatever be the consequence, I cannot, dare not, take such a step as that."

"I see you do not love me, Isabel. Love dares everything for the object of its affection."

"Alas! alas! I would help you more effectually had I the means of doing so honorably," said Isabel, bursting into tears.

"Some unforeseen help may yet turn up," said the stranger, drawing her to him and kissing her. "When next you hear from me, I shall be many miles from this place."

But again he paused, and whispered a few words, with an expression of entreaty on his handsome face, but she turned angrily aside, as if dissenting from some proposal he had made.

A grasp of the hand, a parting embrace, and the two separated, she, with the fleetness of a fawn, in the direction of the chateau, whilst he for a moment lingered, and as the bright moonbeams played full on his face, the watcher by the hillside could see an expression akin to contempt on his handsome features, as he gazed after the retreating form of his companion; then he turned with a loitering step down a road leading to the adjacent town of ——.

CHAPTER XVIII.

BETWEEN NIGHT AND MORNING.



STORMY night had succeeded to a day in which there had been an incessant down-pour of rain, but as the short hours following midnight advanced, the weather became calmer, and the moon rose at intervals from behind the clouds which still drifted across the horizon, occasionally lighting up the chambers of the old chateau and again enveloping them in obscurity.

Three days had passed since Isabel's parting with the stranger. Busy preparations were being made for the return of the family, and while Margaret, whose customary indolence nothing could dispel, frittered away her time, Isabel's fingers were busily employed in sundry matters connected with the decoration of the principal apartments in honor of the arrival.

It was to her a labor of love, and Grace was glad to see that she found a pleasure in the work, though her observant eye detected that the smile on the once bright and happy countenance was now as fleeting as the sunshine on an April day, and that often a weary sigh, half-stifled in its utterance, would escape her lips.

In fact the feelings with which poor Isabel regarded the return of her best friends were rather those of fear than pleasure.

That her movements had been watched by her foster-sister she was well aware; that she had discovered and stolen a letter meant for herself and abstracted another from the book I have alluded to she was quite certain; and she also felt confident that, like a thunder-cloud bursting over her

head, so would the arrival of those she loved lead to disclosures which would perhaps deprive her forever of their friendship and break off her proposed union with Mauriee.

On the night in question, the mind of the poor girl was so harassed, that for a long while sleep was banished from her pillow. One o'clock had struck before she lost herself in a somewhat heavy sleep, the last sound in her ears that of the rain beating against her easement, mingled with the dull sough of the wind; the darkness, also, was intense.

When she was awakened, it was with a sudden start; she did not feel as one usually does on opening one's eyes after sleeping, but had a consciousness that she had been disturbed by some unusual and accidental sound.

The storm had ceased, a bright flood of silvery light illuminated the chamber, and she heard the clock in the turret strike the hour of two.

She felt alarmed, she knew not why, for all was still, but the idea was strong on her mind, ere she was awake enough to be *fully* conscious that some person had made a noise in her own room, close even to the head of the bed.

Trying to think she had been mistaken, she again laid her head on her pillow to compose herself to sleep, when a light footfall struck upon her ear, and she distinctly heard a sharp click, as of a key turning in a lock, very near to her, but *not* in her own apartment. Much alarmed, she rose up in the bed and strove to suppress the shriek that was rising to her lips. Then she heard a person say, in a whisper:

"What a confounded mistake; we had got into the wrong room."

"We are right now, however," was the reply, "and must lose no time; though, fortunately, we did not awake *her*; she was too sound asleep for that."

The pallor of death was on the face and lips of Isabel, as

with cold hands she gently raised the curtain of her bed and looked out in the corridor beyond, her alarm increasing as she found, by the wintry blast which swept across her face, that her casement was open, as also the chamber door, which gave admittance to the corridor, out of which the principal apartments opened.

Then she heard the chink of money, and remembering that the room immediately opposite to her own was that of the Lady Florence, and that it contained an antique cabinet, in which were articles of great value, together with a considerable sum of money, she at once resolved, let come what would of peril to herself, to alarm the house.

But fear and horror combined rendered her powerless to move, for once again struck upon her ear the tones of a voice with which of late she had become painfully familiar, and a bright ray of moonlight streaming into the corridor and the chamber beyond discovered to her the face of the stranger with whom she had held so many stolen interviews.

"To keep silence now is to be a partner in an act of dire villainy," said she to herself, and springing out of bed she rushed into the adjoining room.

"For God's sake, desist," she exclaimed, as she laid her cold grasp on the hands of a man who was employed in emptying one of the drawers of a cabinet of a portion of its contents. "Desist, I say, or I will alarm the house."

"Fool, begone! What is it to you?" said the man, dashesing her hand aside. "Do not lay my blood on your soul; for, by all the saints of heaven, if you utter one word," he added, drawing a pistol from his pocket, "I will shoot myself dead before your eyes."

"Be quick, be quick, Monsieur; that dog will alarm the house, together with this squamish damsels. Shoot yourself indeed! Rather shoot the woman, I should think," and as

he spoke the man, who had escaped Isabel's observation, threw his powerful arm around her waist, and effectually prevented her from screaming by gagging her mouth.

She lay powerless in his arms for perhaps five minutes, though the time seemed an age in its duration. The bay of the watch-dog kept in the courtyard on the other side of the chateau still resounded, she heard footsteps approaching, voices sounded in her ear, together with the ringing of the alarm bell, then the strong arms that encircled her relaxed their grasp, and she fell senseless on the floor.

When she recovered she found herself in her own bed, the wintry sun was streaming into the room, and Mrs. Wilmot and the nurse were leaning over her.

She looked around as if she was bewildered, and after a pause—

"Dear Mistress Grace," said she, "I do pray you tell me what has happened?"

"Could you not tell Mistress Wilmot better than she can tell you, foster-sister?" And Margaret came forward from the spot at which she had been stationed, and fixed her keen black eyes with a searching glance on the trembling Isabel, saying as plainly as eyes could speak :

"I know your secret; at least I know enough of it to ruin you; me you cannot deceive."

"I pray you remember, Miss Margaret, that your foster-sister had had a gag forced into her mouth. The fact of her being in the chamber of the Lady Florence showeth nothing but that she is courageous beyond the average of her sex," said Grace, supporting on her bosom the head of the unhappy Isabel, whose eyes sank beneath the fierce and insidious gaze of Margaret.

Then, after she had wholly recovered, came the recapitulation of the scene of the previous night, she merely omit-

ting to mention the terrible fact that she had many times seen and conversed with the principal actor in the present outrage.

But across the mind of the shrewd and amiable Grace shot a sentiment of surprise that a young and timid woman, incapable of the power of resistance, should, of her own accord, have left her chamber in the dead hour of the night and have placed herself, without any chance of being able to effect good, in the power of ruffians such as those who had burglariously entered the chateau.

"Let those believe the tale who will, I will not give credence to it," said Margaret, scornfully and half aloud, as she left the room.

Then Grace acquainted Isabel with the extent of the robbery, which was far from inconsiderable. A large sum of money, which Grace knew had been deposited in the cabinet, had been removed, as well as a set of diamonds from a casket belonging to Lady Florence; at the same time Grace mentioned that several articles of great value had been left behind, which must positively have laid under the very hand of the robber when he took away the other jewels and the money.

A heavy load lay at the heart of this aged woman as she gazed on the sad, altered face of her favorite, and vainly strove to account in her own mind for much that had long been inexplicable in the conduct of the once frank and light-hearted Isabel, whose confidence she found herself quite unable to obtain; and, at the same time, she felt assured that Margaret was acquainted with much that would be brought to light when the Marshal and his family arrived home.

CHAPTER XIX.

MISGIVINGS.

BAFTER unfortunate matters to herald our return," said Madame St. John, the morning after the return of the family to their home, "the murder of Count de Foix, the bosom friend of Maurice and the King's favorite, and the robbery of some of your most costly jewels, Lady Florence."

"That robbery is, to say the least, inexplicable," was the reply, "so much that was valuable left untouched, at the same time, leads me to believe that it was no common thief who invaded our dwelling."

As the lady spoke, she involuntarily raised her eyes to the countenance of Isabel; it was deadly pale.

Leaning against the window stood Margaret, bravely beautiful; her morning dress of primrose-colored paduasoy, with apron of flowered lawn, set off her slender figure, and as Lady Florence spoke, she, too, fixed her gaze on Isabel's pale face.

"The King has ordered strict search to be made for the man who killed De Foix, but, hitherto, without avail," observed the Marshal. "I will set the emissaries of justice to find, if possible, the men who have committed this robbery, perhaps, also, without success. Maurice will keenly feel the death of De Foix, slain, one may say, in cold blood. I have small hopes myself, after the lapse of nearly two months, that the murderer will be found."

In accordance with the desire of Lady St. John, Isabel, pale and trembling, prepared to leave home on a mission of charity. During the early part of this, the first day of her return home, Grace had been closeted more than an hour with Lady Florence, and had given her a faithful account

of all those circumstances which had appeared inexplicable respecting the conduct of Isabel, ever putting a favorable construction, when possible, on her actions, but acknowledging that the whole tenor of her life and disposition seemed absolutely changed.

A wall of separation, in fact, seemed suddenly to have sprung up between three loving natures. If Grace was at fault, thought Lady Florene, how could she herself hope to penetrate through the mystery, unless by the full and entire confidence which had been denied to the former?

Isabel was scarce out of sight when her foster-sister requested the favor of a private interview. The bold bearing of Margaret denoted that she was conscious of the dread power she possessed, but, with all the cunning of her character, aware of the love with which Lady Florene regarded Isabel, she approached the topic of her misdeeds with much caution and many expressions of heartfelt sorrow that she was the person whose painful duty it was to disclose the failings of her foster-sister.

"Do not speak in enigmas, Margaret, to the point at once; if any matters have come to your knowledge, which your conscience tells you it is right that I should know, disclose them, young Mistress, without hesitation."

Then Margaret detailed those circumstances of which you are aware, glossing over her espionage of Isabel, under the specious pretext of a friendly solicitude. The occasions on which she had so sedulously tracked the steps of the unfortunate girl were mentioned, and the stolen letters, which were irrefragable points in her evidence, were produced, and Margaret ended her strange story with the remark, that there were sufficient reasons for suspecting that one of the men who had broken into the chateau was none other than the person with whom her rash foster-sister had connected herself.

The Lady Florence heard the long recital with feelings of poignant sorrow. She doubted not the truth of Margaret's words; she felt they were, alas! too truly verified by the letters which lay before her; but well she divined the feelings which had led her to dog her foster-sister's steps, and, after a long pause, she remarked:

"And pray, Mistress Margaret, why did you not confide from the first in my friend, Mrs. Wilmot, a person, from her age and experience, fitted to guide you both? I like not the idea that you should have stolen forth to dog this misguided girl's steps, on dark winter evenings, unattended by a servant; you, yourself, Margaret Lindsey, are sorely to blame."

Then, ringing a small silver bell that stood beside her, the Lady summoned Graee Wilmot to her presence.

"Grace, my dear friend," said she, when the latter made her appearance, "strange things have been done in our absence; repeat your tale, Mistress Margaret, and much I wish you had laid open your heart to my friend ere matters had gone this far."

"I deemed I was acting wisely, Madam, in not even bestowing my confidence on Miss Wilmot," replied the bold beauty, in a tone of voice that savored strongly of contempt; "she would doubtless have forbidden me to follow the course I pursued, but for which the mark of superior virtue would never have been stripped from my false foster-sister."

"I asked you not for *your* reasons, young Mistress," exclaimed the Lady, angrily; "I can well surmise what you *wished*; your own conduct, understand, has in no way pleased me."

"In that I am most unhappy, Madam," replied Margaret, bowing with a mock humility; "your Ladyship loved this Isabel, and as it is unhappily myself, not the favored one,

whose lot it is to make manifest her guilt, I am doomed to bear your anger."

"Silence! maiden, and repeat to Mistress Wilmot what you have told myself," and the Lady rose and approached a window, which commanded a view of the valley beneath, for the purpose of concealing the tears which would rush to her eyes in spite of her efforts to restrain them.

She could just descry the form of her once beloved Isabel walking, with a weary step, towards the chateau. She appeared utterly and entirely changed; her step had lost the elasticity of youth, her eye its brightness, her cheek its healthful glow.

Grace never once interrupted the beautiful speaker in her long recital, but when Margaret had concluded, she said, gravely:

"Time will explain this mystery. I have a firm belief, Madam, in spite of the terrible lines Mistress Margaret has placed before me, in the spotless innocence of Isabel; but had Grace Wilmot been some years younger and less infirm than she is, neither of your *protégées*, Lady Florence, had crossed the threshold of the chateau after the fall of evening."

"Give to me those letters, Margaret, and leave the room," said Lady Florence.

Then she begged of Grace to send Madame to her, to whom she detailed the startling revelations of Margaret Lindsey.

Madame St. John possessed a clear head and a good heart, but she was staggered, nevertheless, in belief as to Isabel's innocence, and mentally rejoiced that the love dream of her son had not ended in an irretrievable entanglement before these events occurred.

Lady Florence was resolved not to let the day pass without a private interview with Isabel, whom she sent for later in the day.

It is often said that the innocent have no cause for fear, but be it remembered that in this case the actions of Isabel, whatever the motives might have been from which those actions sprung, appeared in all the semblance of guilt, and, with pallid face and trembling limbs, she approached the Lady Florence, whom she had always tenderly loved, and drawing a small ottoman to the Lady's side, she sat herself down at her feet, and raising her deep blue eyes, humid with tears, she fixed them on her face as if in deprecation of her just anger.

For a moment neither of the two spoke ; then said Lady Florence :

" My dearest Isabel, on whom I have bestowed a mother's fondest love, for you have filled up the void in my heart caused by the death of my own beloved daughter, a strange, wild tale hath reached my ears. I try not to give credence to it ; at least, I feel assured, that whatever there may be of seeming guilt in your conduct, you, my best beloved child, can explain away. Know you this handwriting ? "

As the Lady spoke, she laid before Isabel the letters Margaret had purloined, looking pityingly down the while upon the pale and almost frightened upturned face before her.

" Alas ! alas ! I do," she said, " those letters were stolen from me by my foster-sister, I believe."

" My child, my Isabel, place your entire confidence in myself, your best and truest friend ; I ask only this, I will repeat to you what I have heard and await your refutation of the charges laid against you."

Then the Lady Florence repeated the story of Margaret, wishing, oh ! how vainly, that she could see a flush of honest indignation mantle the cheek of her favorite ; but no. Torrents of tears coursed down her checks, and ever, ever, to the interrogatories of Lady Florence, was such and such an assertion true ? the fair head was bent in token of assent.

"And now, my child, the name of this stranger, the purpose of your meeting, the manner of your first acquaintance with him ; tell me all."

"Gracious Madam, oh, would that I could, but a solemn vow has sealed my lips to silence. Bear with me yet awhile, dear Lady Florence ; believe me most innocent, whilst I needs must seem most guilty."

"A vow ! an oath of secersty ! who could have had such influence over you as to bind your lips to silence ? Bethink you, my child, of the position in which you stand ; those letters before you, will you not explain ? words which *must* condemn you, Isabel, in the minds of others, if not of myself. The night of tho robbery, too, when you, a young, defenceless maiden, were known to have left your chamber ; your jewels given away, the souvenirs my love hath bestowed upon you. Ah ! Isabel, my child, heed not this rash vow, but tell me all ; a direful change hath wrought upon you since we parted."

Isabel rose from her seat and threw herself on her knees before the Lady Florence.

"Gracious Madam," said she, with now tearless eyes, but her countenance marked with the deepest sorrow, "my heart is nigh broken with grief ; on my bended knees I can but implore you to bear with me still ; to try and believe that in thought, word, and action I am innocent and pure ; to pray that the merciful God may, ere long, so order events that I may bo suffered to explain away tho mystery which now surrounds me."

"Alas ! alas ! Isabel, my child, the strangeness of your conduct passes my comprehension," said the gentle Lady. "but be it so ; I will think the best myself, and do all in my power to lead others to do tho same."

"Ah, Madam, dearest Madam, may God bless you for

those loving words," and Isabel fixed on Lady Florence a gaze in which the extreme of sorrow was combined with love and despair. Then she said, in a low voice :

" I would ask a boon, dear Lady Florence, if one in so unhappy a plight dare, indeed, make a petition."

" Speak on, Isabel."

" I am so very miserable as to be an object of distrust to those around me ; let me shrink away, as it were, from the notice of others, till it shall please God to end my trial. Will you, dearest Madam, allow me to seek only the companionship of Mistress Wilmot, that wise and good woman, who, seeing all things tell against me, with yourself, dear Lady Florence, hopes that I am still innocent ?"

" No, Isabel ; to allow such a proceeding would tacitly amount to a belief in your guilt. The Marshal would not allow such a step, nor would Madame St. John."

" Ah, Madam, you are all so good that you will fain believe me innocent, and not the wretch, dead to gratitude and virtue, which an unhappy line of circumstances makes me seem to be ; but there is one whom I fear so much, who has no right or power over me, yet I dread her sarcasm, her insinuations, her hatred—in one word, I fear my foster-sister."

" Your foster-sister, indeed ; but *I* will see that she presumeth not to become your judge," and the spirit of the O'Neills betrayed itself in the Lady's kindling eyes and flushed cheeks, as she spoke, and ringing her bell, she directed that Mistress Lindsey should attend her immediately.

Isabel had again resumed her first position beside Lady Florence, and her face, turned towards Margaret as she entered, betrayed the grief she felt. The bold beauty, nothing abashed by Lady Florence's late rebuke, swept

past the unhappy girl with a cold supereiliousness which did not escape her observation.

"Come hither, Mistress Margaret," she exclaimed, in a tone and manner which evinced displeasure; "I wish you to know that it is our will and pleasure that no allusion is made to your foster-sister concerning past events. Time, which often brings to light much that is hard to understand, will, I feel convinced, unravel all that is now hard to reconcile with the innocence of Isabel, save her want of discretion. I have no more to say to you, save to command you to square your conduct accordingly."

"Isabel has much cause to be thankful, Madam, for your leniency of judgment. There are few who would regard her as innocent with such conclusive proofs against her."

The vindictive expression of her features did not escape Lady Florence. She had hoped to behold Isabel deprived of the protection of her friends with every mark of contumely and scorn.

"Begone! maiden, this instant, and try to learn that mercy you so sorely need. Do not presume to bandy words with me again, and reserve your opinion till it is asked for."

Humbled and silenced, but swelling with anger, Margaret curtsied to the Lady and left the chamber. For a few moments the latter remained silent, and a weary expression sat on the handsome features which still retained, in a striking degree, traces of their former exquisite beauty; then, bending forward, she kissed as lovingly as of old the brow of Isabel.

"Now go," said she, "and seek my friend Grace. I will acquaint the Marshal with my determination respecting you. I have a firm hope that the day may yet come, mysterious as is your present conduct, when this wretched bus-

iness will be cleared up, and show that you have never been unworthy of my trusting love."

"Dearest, best of friends, may God desert me in my hour of utmost need if I ever forget the mercy you have shown me," and raising the Lady's hand to her lips Isabel covered it with tears and kisses, and then hastened to her room.



CHAPTER XX.

GONE.



AVE a visit at stated intervals to families of note residing in Paris, such as that of the Baron de Breteul, there was no change in the home life of the Marshal's family, and, as far as might be possible, the late painful episode in the life of Isabel was hushed up.

The enjoyment experienced by Margaret at the supposed defection of her foster-sister was not of long duration. She had hoped to have seen her fall for ever in the love and esteem of those who had adopted her, and driven with scorn and contumely from her home. But had she really been as guilty as Margaret desired she should be, her sin could not have been visited on her head with greater severity than it was by others who, with the proneness of poor human nature to look on the black side of things, had received as gospel truth Margaret's narration, so that in a few months, notwithstanding the circumspection of Lady Florenee, the character of Isabel was done to death. The misfortune of the whole affair consisted in Isabel's refusal to make, what is termed, a clean breast of it, and declare the whole truth from beginning to end. She had persisted in keeping silence at all risks and hazard to herself, and after the first painful interview, Lady Florence had never recurred to the subject.

Whether in the quiet reunions with the few Jacobite families living in the neighborhood of St. Germains, or during the few months of the year more gaily spent in Paris, it was equally the same; a certain restraint marked the intercourse of others with the unfortunate Isabel, and rapidly it was exchanged for a cold and cutting neglect.

During many months she looked long and anxiously for a letter which never came ; that hope had alone supported her, combined with the matchless love of Lady Florenee ; it grew fainter and fainter as time passed on. Twice the winter snows had fallen since the fatal evening on which she had pledged herself to secersty, and yet not a word, not a token that she was remembered ; so that ever and again she asked herself, had he escaped the hands of justice ? was he still alive ? would the hour of her own death come and the shadow still hang over her ? could she say who had committed the theft unless restitution was made ?

She had herself, in a letter blistered with her tears, released Maurice of the troth he had plighted to her, and her mind then became absorbed with one idea, which she hastened to carry into execuction.

Early one morning, when the family assembled at breakfast, she was absent.

The chateau and its immediate neighborhood were searched without avail, and Margaret was nothing loth to hint that perchance the *unknown* had again appeared upon the scene and spirited her foster-sister away altogether.

All doubt, however, was soon at an end by Lady Florenee recciving a letter, a few hours later, couched in the following words :

“ Forgive me, beloved Madam, for the unauthorized step that I have taken in absenting myself from my beloved home without a formal adieu to those to whom I owe far more than words can express.

“ I have borne with coldness and constraint on the part of others, because I have hoped that very long ere this *he* who bound me to silence would have released me from my vow. Hope has at last died out, and I have resolved to retire into the most utter religious seclusion till, by the mercy of God, the shadow that has fallen on my reputation shall be cleared away.

"I have fled no farther, most beloved friend, than the abbey wherein you placed me to be educated. I have besought the good nuns to allow me to pass my time in teaching their pupils, so that I may not feel myself a burthen on their charity.

"Trusting that the day may yet come in which, under happier circumstances, I may present myself before you,

"I am, dearest Madam, your very affectionate

"ISABEL FITZGERALD."

Much as the members of the Marshal's family regretted the step Isabel had taken, they felt but little surprise after the first shock caused by her flight had passed away. As to Margaret, she could with difficulty restrain her joy. It was now quite possible that Maurice St. John might no longer be proof against her fascinations. But, though the field was apparently clear, though the beautiful, unscrupulous Margaret had now no rival, she was not a whit nearer the end to gain which she had so basely planned and plotted, for Maurice, at best, was but coldly civil.

At length the weary tedium of her discontented life was broken by the news that she was to accompany the family to Edinburgh, and with unspeakable joy she made the preparations for her journey.

"Farewell, odious old chateau," said she, apostrophizing the quaint old home which had sheltered her infancy. "Farewell, for a time at least. If ever change of scene and change of persons were anxiously desired it is by me. And what care I for his neglect?" she added, with an expression of contempt on her handsome face. "My beauty may attract admirers elsewhere even if it has passed neglected here."



CHAPTER XXI.

THE OLD HOUSE IN THE EDINBURGH CLOSE.

 HE Wynds and Closes of the now old town of Edinburgh, with their great tall houses of gray stone eight, ten, and even twelve stories high, crowned in the distance by that grand old castle, the relic of former days, standing on the summit of a precipitous rock, at once arrested Margaret's attention.

Little indeed did the beautiful and haughty woman ken, as the Marshal's cumbrous equipage wound its way up the High Street, that in that portion denominated the Lawn-Market her grandsire had kept his woolen and linen store, or she would almost have wished herself back again in France.

In one of those old Closes wherin the houses are so very near each other that they almost shut out the blue sky and the free air of heaven, now sinking into decay and ruin, but in the year 1735 places of fashionable resort, as their names bear witness, the Marshal had engaged a portion of a spacious Flat for the use of his family during their sojourn in Edinburgh. The best rooms were situated at the back of the house, and they overlooked a pleasant garden, quaintly laid out with patches of green turf, gravel walks, and leafy trees, between the branches of which you might catch a glimpse of the castle, frowning grandly on the scene beneath.

The attendants on the Marshal's family were principally the wife and daughter of the landlord of the Flat in question; the one a homely middle-aged woman, the younger was good-looking, and was reserved, quiet, and staid in her demeanor; there was also one serving-maid, whose office appeared mainly limited to keeping the rooms cleanly and in good order. The younger woman, Janet, particularly

pleased the ladies upon whom she waited. She appeared to be the presiding genius of the very comfortable and homelike lodgings into which, for some six weeks, they were located.

A man far advanced in life particularly excited the risible faculties of Margaret, who, from her chamber window, was in the habit of looking down into the garden beneath, in which he usually took his seat for many hours on the bright summer days, his bald head covered with a flannel night-cap, and his bent frame swathed in a large plaid; and from thence she not unfrequently heard him rating soundly at the women of his household, or reading the Bible in a clear, sonorous voice for their edification.

That he ever intruded himself into the portion of the Flat his lodgers had engaged they were not aware; but one morning when the sun was shining brightly on the castle walls in the distance, with its green slopes and frowning mass of rock beneath, and idle Margaret not yet out of her bed, she amused herself by listening to the following colloquy whilst an adjoining room was being cleaned:

"Dinna glower at me in sic a fashion, woman. I dinna care wha the folks are, I'll not gie plack o' my savings for my chield to become a lazy limmer."

"They be braw people," was the reply, "and the young leddy thinks much o' hersel and gies mickle trouble. Janet does na ken how to do sic wark."

"Haud thy clavers, woman. All the siller I hae saved will be Janet's when I dee. I let her hae ane taw pie to help, and she maun do her best, or I sall turn my back upon her as ye ken, gudewife, I hae dune before. You had it your ain way years agone, I working hard and you and your bairn hauding your heads as high as any o' the leddies o' the land; and now that the Lord sees fit some o' my siller and gowd suld pass frac me, and I canna let you ruffle your plumes as the wife and chield of a rich trader, and now you

hac only to come back to the same point at whilk you started when I made you my wife, but you make sic a clavers about my ears as never was heard before."

"But, Davie, mon, I could put up wi all, an I didna ken you had muckle siller, still, an you were *really* a poor mon, Davie, I"—

"I tell you, gudewife, I hac not a bawbee to sparc, and you maun tell Janet as soon as you list, if she wanna be blithe and happy, then she maun flit, as ane as gude or better than she had to do lang sync."

Then there was a pause, and Margaret heard the old man shuffle down the long gallery without to his own portion of the Flat, and a little later came the light step of Janet, followed by that of the servant-maid.

"O, mither, mither," she heard the former distinctly say, though she spoke in an undertone, as if she feared she should be heard, "I hope the fine folks have na heard my father's din. He hac sent me and Marion to help you."

"I am just sick of my life," was the reply. "Your father's a miser, Janet. He is saying his siller and making us wark like horses."

"Sic an awfu' temper the gudemon hao got," said the handmaiden. "He is amaist daft the morn, deaving ane wi his clavers. To speak amang oursels, were I in your shoon, the gudemon suldna mak me wark. I'd be as braw a leddy as ony i' the land, instead o' waitin on ithers."

The answer, whatever it might have been, was lost on eaves-dropping Margaret, beyond the careful "Whisht, lassie, the folks may hear you" of the old man's wife, who gently closed the door as she spoke.

It was not in the nature of proud Margaret to be courteous and affable to those whom she considered beneath herself, and the humble Janet had suffered from her superciliousness from the moment she entered the house.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE BEGINNING OF THE END.



“*GUIDE* guide us, what do I see?” said Janet, starting back, and giving utterance to a loud shriek.

“*Hout na, Miss Janet, dinna ye skreigh like that. Ye hae gien me sie a fright. Wha is in that wee bit o’ locket to gar ye turn so pale?*”

Thus spoke the maid as, on one bright morning, she stood beside Margaret Lindsey’s toilet-table earnestly regarding Janet, who, busily employed in the task of putting away sundry articles prior to the chamber being cleaned, had taken up, amongst other trinkets, the locket which that young lady’s dead mother had hung round her neck, and which, rarely laid aside, had been on this identical morning forgotten.

With parted lips and eyes rivetted on the tiny miniature contained in the locket, Janet remained for a few moments silent; then, without answering the girl, she rushed like one demented along the gallery leading to her father’s room. And speaking never a word when she entered, she went to the antique mantel-piece and took down from thence a very small, but finely executed portrait. She stood for a moment silently comparing it with the miniature in the locket; the one was a perfect fac-simile of the other.

Her father gazed at her in mute astonishment.

“*Art thou ganging clane daft? Janet, wha’s the matter wi ye?*”

“*Father, father,*” and Janet crept round to the old man’s side, “*I can bring you comfort. Look here, tell me whose portrait is this?*”

"Janet, you are worse than silly, for you open an old sore. Have I not often told you it is the portrait of your half-sister Margaret, whom I druv from heart and hame, and whose bairn, may the Lord forgie me, I turned adrift?"

As the old man spoke his hands trembled and his face grew pale.

"Look, father, look at this!" and Janet showed him the locket. "It has upon its back the name of Margaret Graham!"

The old man pushed back the white locks which strayed over his forehead, on which a damp dew had gathered.

"Margaret! Margaret!" he twice repeated, and then, putting on his glasses, he gazed intently, first on one, and then on the other.

"Gude Lord! Thy ways are sac wondersfu' ways," said he, with head bowed down, and in tones of the deepest emotion. "Tell me, lassie, frac where did ye get this locket?"

"It belongs to the fine young leddy whom they ea' Margaret; she whom we thought was the Marshal's daughter, father;" and there was a slight touch of sarcasm in the tones of Janet's voice. "The maid told me she was no relation to him or to the ladies. Wha if she be my ain long-lost tilitie, father?"

"Silly lassie, she wad be auld eneugh to be thy mither. But the Lord can bring light out o' darkness. Wha if she be the bairn whom I in my wicked fury turned adrift?"

Again his face grew white with a ghastly pallor, and his long, withered fingers trembled as he placed one hand on his heart and with the other strove to steady himself as he grasped his daughter's arm.

Then he tore off the flannel cap which disfigured his head and called hastily for his coat and walking-stick; his whole manner was marked by extreme nervous agitation.

With somewhat of alarm, his wife and daughter—the former having just entered the room—watched his movements; but their anxiety increased when they found he was about to proceed to the apartments of Lady Florence, the Marshal having been for some days absent in a distant part of Scotland.

Janet and her mother did their best to detain him, but without effect.

"Haud your clavers, gudewife," said he, "I hae found again the bairn I turned adrift."

He left the room, and when he had nearly reached Lady Florence's apartments he suddenly paused.

"Gang awa quickly, lassie, and ask the leddy to gie me speech a few minutes. Is my bairn—is the young leddy frac hame?"

"Yes, father, Lady Florence is alone."

Her heart beating more wildly than usual, Janet left her father alone, and with a tremor in her voice beyond her power to control, she enquired if her "*Leddyship*" would let her father have the honor of a few moments conversation.

Somewhat surprised, for but that the old man was the butt of Margaret's ridicule, Lady Florence had not known there was such a person in existence, as the apartments had been taken from his wife. She signified her acquiescence, and in no small wonderment awaited the coming of her visitor, whose feeble steps and panting breath she heard as he approached her room.

The Lady Florence was now advancing into years, but time seemed chary of leaving his usual trace on her still fair, unwrinkled brow, and like another Ninon, the charms of her youth had survived the hand of time.

Introduced by his daughter, the old man stood for a moment at the entrance of the apartment nervous and irres-

olute, one trembling hand grasping the stick, the other clutching the miniature Janet had discovered, together with the portrait, both of which had been taken at the same time, and were each the production of the same artist.

"My father, my Leddy," stammered out poor Janet, as she tried to lead him further into the room.

"Come hither, my good Janet, and tell me what your father wishes," said the lady good-naturedly.

But Janet did not heed her words.

"Come, father, come," said she, in the tone in which one would address a little child; "what do you wish to say to Lady Florenee; do you not see she is waiting for you to speak?"

Then the old man hobbled forward, leaning on his stick; he approached the table at which the Lady was seated, looked at her as if she could inspire him with the words for which he felt at a loss, and then placed side by side, before her wondering eyes, the portrait and the miniature.

"Pardon the trouble an old man gives you, my Leddy," he faltered out, "but look, and tell me, Madam, are not both these alike?"

In his nervous agitation he no longer spoke his Scottish dialect.

"Undoubtedly," was the reply, in a tone of unfeigned surprise, for Lady Florence at once recognized Margaret's locket.

"Alack-a-day, Madam! alack-a-day! that I should stand in your honorable presence and be obliged to own that I turned from my home and from my heart the child of whom I had those portraits taken."

Here a low sob choked the old man's utterance, and Lady Florence felt as one spell-bound at the revelation which was bursting upon her.

Wishful to help him, if possible, she said, pointing to the locket :

"A miniature, like that, is worn by the young lady who lives with me, and whom I adopted when an infant."

"It is the same, my Lady," replied Janet; "surprised at recognizing my half-sister's likeness, led me to take the locket from the toilet table to show it to my father."

"Ah! Madam, Madam, pity me for the shame I feel," burst forth the old man, "I turned my Margaret's bairn from the door even as I had driven forth its mother, and I have toiled, and wept, and prayed in hopes that the Lord would sooner or later restore her to me, and that day has at last come, Madam."

"We shall see, we shall see," said the Lady, lost in a maze of the wildest conjecture. The meeting with this old man had been so sudden, the revelation so startling, and then came the remembrance of the proud and haughty disposition of Margaret; this very old man had been the object of her ill-timed ridicule; his simple-minded daughter, in her eyes, had been as less than nothing.

"Yes," he rambled on, in a low voice, speaking rather to himself than to the Lady Florence, "by night and by day, for mony a year, I hae never ceased to pray that the Lord would send back *her* bairn to me; holy be His name! He hath seen fit to grant my prayer before He calleth me frae the world."

At this moment, the quick ear of Janet caught the sound of voices in the gallery.

"I wish I could have seen Margaret alone before she hears this startling revelation," thought Lady Florene, and, at the same moment, Janet observed, with a glance of pity at his pale face :

"My father is much excited, Madam. I wish he would

leave *you*, my Leddy, to break out the truth to—to his grand-daughter."

But there was no time to take him away, for the next moment, preceded by the stately Madame St. John, and in all the luxuriance of wealth, and youth, and beauty, proud Margaret swept into the apartment.

Like Madame, she paused when midway; the presence of the pallid, trembling old man, and the simple, awe-struck Janet, holding a conference with Lady Florene, filled them both with surprise.

"Margaret, my own winsome bairn," burst forth David Graham, tears of joy trickling down his furrowed cheeks, "have I found thee at last; welcome, dear lassie, to my home and heart," and, as he spoke, he advanced to the wondering beauty and laid his trembling hand upon her arm.

Terrified, surprised, fearing she knew not what, Margaret visibly shuddered, and recoiled from his touch.

A glimmering of the appalling truth had floated across her mind.

"I do not understand, what does all this mean?" said she, in a cold and frigid tone; then her eyes fell on her own locket, containing the miniature of her dead mother, and beside it the larger portrait, and she faintly comprehended how matters stood.

A shiver ran through her veins. Why, oh! why had she neglected to place the miniature round her neck? are these low, vulgar people claiming affinity with me? were thoughts which flashed with the rapidity of lightning through her brain. She then came forward, with a pallid face, and, in a voice the trembling tones of which she could not check, exclaimed proud Margaret:

"I do implore you, dear Lady Florene, tell me at once what means this strange tale? I know nothing of this man who presumes to claim kindred with *me*."

There was supplication in the tones of Margaret's voice, entreaty, even horror. Lady Florence, who knew well the passion of pride that had enthralled her soul from infancy upwards, noted all this, but most the pure, humble-minded lady felt for the unhappy old man, and his gentle daughter, who stood pale and trembling by her side.

"My dear Margaret," said she, "that your dead mother *was* the daughter of this aged man, and that *you* are, consequently, his grand-daughter, admits not of a doubt. The miniature you had left upon your toilet table has been compared, my love, with yonder portrait; both were taken at the same time, before—before—"

Here Lady Florence hesitated.

"Before, wretch that I was, I turned my poor bairn from my home," said David Graham; "but, alack! alack! I have wept and sorrowed long, and now let me but hear you say you forgive me, and come and share with me the money I hae saved for you, for whom I hae so long waited, and I can die happy and my heart will never sorrow more."

"I cannot credit this wild story, I do not admit the relationship, old man," and the haughty beauty drew herself up to her full height; "I have only your bare, unsupported assertion that *I* am the child of a daughter of yours."

"Spare him; he speaks, alas! the truth," and gentle Janet drew her father to a seat, and strove to kiss away the tears which fell down his furrowed cheeks; then, observing the ghastly pallor of his countenance, she exclaimed:

"Proud Margaret Lindsey, if you want further proof, my mother can supply it; unfortunately for her and for me, you *are* of our kith and kin."

"No word, not one word of affectionate forgiveness, and yet the Lord knoweth David Graham hath sorrowed long over the sin of twenty years syne; he hath toiled that she

might reap, if ever again his bairn's bairn should cross his path ; he made his wife and daughter toil that there should be enough and to spare for all. Speak, lassie, speak, say but *one* kind word to thy ain grandsire ; thy mither would not have been half sae hard."

"Enough ! I will hear no more. It is all an idle tale ; I believe not a word of it," said Margaret, wrenching the end of her robe from her grandfather's grasp, as she passed him by.

"Proud, cruel woman, pause and see what you hae done," said Janet, grasping her niece by the arm and compelling her to stop. The aged head had fallen heavily on the bosom of his child, and the features, still wearing the same expression of piteous entreaty with which he had last addressed his ruthless kinswoman, were now fixed in the repose of death.

Struck with horror at the sight, a revulsion then took place in the heart of this haughty woman. That the tale she had listened to *was* true she had not for one moment doubted ; but her terrible pride, that hideous master-passion, the hydra-headed monster which had prompted many of her deeds of wickedness, and which she had suffered to sway every action of her still young life, had steeled her heart. To be claimed by *him*, to be proved to be the grandchild of this man, of an inferior class of life, the niece of the woman who was as a servant to them all, and whom she had looked on as the dust beneath her feet, was far more than she could endure.

But she was now in the presence of death, nay, of that which she dreaded far more, of the stings of her own conscience ; for *he* could never speak again, would that he could ! But there sat the Lady Florence, whose sorrowful eyes said far more than words. There stood Madame St. John, whose "Hush, you shock me, child," when she had

last addressed the old man, still trembled in her ears. There was his daughter, her dead mother's half sister, her arms still thrown around the corpse, her eyes raining torrents of tears on the pallid features ; and more, even, than all these, there stood the dead man's irate wife, who, out of respect for her lodgers, had not intruded in their presence, but had listened in the gallery without, her blood at boiling heat when she ascertained *why* he had suddenly become penurious, and had sentenced herself and her daughter to a life of toil.

But she could impose restraint upon herself no longer when she found, from Janet's lamentations, that her husband, in the midst of his excitement, had been struck with death.

"Ye ha'e had nae pity on his white hears, proud quean," said she, forgetting, in her excitement, the English she had so carefully studied, "and sma' comfort may his gowd and siller bring till ye ; an unco bad thing it is for ye to ha'e killed him wi your bitter words ; ah ! it is sma' use to grat noo, ye maun drink as ye ha'e brewed ; and ye ha'e my malison wi tho gowd and siller my misfortunate David ha'e keepit for ye."

"Woman, spare me ; none can sorrow more deeply than I now do over the past ; would—would that I could recall it ; yet, suffer me," said she, advancing to where Janet stood, and pushing aside a lock of white hair, she pressed her lips on the forehead of the corpse ; then, clasping her hands together, she exclaimed, as she left the room :

"Ah ! my God ! would that I could recall the words I have uttered."

"You must do more than wish, Margaret Lindsey," said the Lady Florene, who, with Madame, had followed her from the apartment ; "pray that the grace of an humble

spirit may be given you ; put far away from you, once and for ever, that indomitable, miserable pride, for it has become the very curse of your nature."

If tears could have restored the spark of life, those of Margaret would have availed, if the remorse she really felt might be accepted as an atonement ; her heart was pierced through and through, now, alas ! too late.

She locked herself up in her own room, visited by none but Janet and the angelic Lady Florence.

With the former, she every night and morning visited the chamber in which the corpse was laid until, a few days later, the remains of the old woolen-draper were interred in the churchyard of the Gray-friars.

The day following the Marshal returned from Argyllshire, and the family prepared for their journey to St. Germain.

To the amazement of her former protectors, Margaret avowed her determination of remaining in Edinburgh, and also avowed her intention of profiting by the fortune which, in his remorse for his hard-hearted conduct to his daughter, the old man, whose death Margaret had caused in the end, had bequeathed to her in his will. To enable him to carry out this intention, he had sentenced his wife and daughter to a life of toil and labor.

In the minds of the Marshal and his family it was a question as to which humiliation was most intolerable to proud Margaret, that of remaining with themselves, after the *dénouement*, in their Edinburgh lodgings, or descend at once from her high state and live in an humble though independent style on the savings of her unfortunate grandfather.

At any rate, the Marshal and his wife and daughter-in-law were well pleased that their son Maurice, whose engagement to Isabel she had herself broken off, was no longer exposed to the artful machinations of a woman as proud and ambitious as she was beautiful and wicked.

The night before Lady Florence left Edinburgh Margaret craved an interview alone. She entered the room, pale and subdued, clad in robes of the deepest mourning. There was nothing bright and exultant in her now, as taking Lady Florence's hand in her own, she said :

"I cannot summon up resolution to face the Marshal and Madame St. John, dear Madam, but I beg you all to accept my thanks for the past, and I conjure you to try and forget that such a being as Margaret Lindsey ever existed."

"Ah, Margaret, my child," said the gentle Lady, "rather will I pray uneasinessingly that you, on whom God hath showered so many gifts, may strive to overcome your own nature; then, not in vain, my Margaret, will you have been *claimed at last*. I shall always be glad to hear from you and of your well-being."

"I shall never forget you, dear Lady Florence, whether you hear from me or not you will please bear that in mind," and the beautiful head was bent, and a tear fell on the hand of her former benefactress as she raised it to her lips.

This was the only manifestation of womanly weakness, then Margaret was herself again, and making a low obeisance to the impulsive and affectionate friend, who for one moment had folded her in her arms and kissed her on either cheek, she vanished from the room.

Gentle, warm-hearted Lady Florence watched the stately retreating form, then she covered her face with her hands and shed some very bitter tears. "These women, whom I have loved and cherished even as my own daughters, they both have left me," she murmurs, "Margaret is almost as passionate as ever. Oh! my God! touch Thou, in Thy mercy, that proud heart, and bring her to Thee yet, if even through the furnace of tribulation."





PART SECOND.

CHAPTER I.

THE RAISING OF THE STANDARD.

Oh, better loved he canna be ;
Yet, when wo seo him wearing
Our Highland plaid sae gracefulely,
Tis ayo tho mair endearing.

Though a' that now adorns his brow
Be but a simplon bonnet,
Ero long we'll see, of kingdoms threo,
The royal crown upon it. *



KNOW you far better than you know yourself ; I pray you, dear Lochiel, do not expose yourself to the fascinations of the young Prince ; if he once sets his eycs upon you, he will make you do whatever he pleases. Write to him, but on no account see him. At this very moment, is not our own father wearing out a life of exile in France through his attainer in the Rebellion of 1715 ? Should not this thought operate as a warning to his sons ? ”

Thus spoke Cameron, of Fassefern, to the chieftain, Lochiel.

With but seven followers, afterwards called the seven men of Moidart, the gallant Prince Charlie, eldest son of James,

* Jacobite Song.

and of Clementina Sobieski, had landed in an almost inaccessible district of Invernesshire. Caution, worldly wisdom and cold circumspection were fast giving way in the presence of the noble and dignified youth, whose easy and graceful manners won upon every heart.*

Lochiel promised his more prudent brother that he would be firm, and not compromise himself by any rash or ill-advised step; but his colder feelings were scattered to the winds when in the presence of the irresistible and fascinating Prince.

The standard is unfurled in the wild valley of Glenfinnan, and the veteran Marshal hastened from St. Germain, attended by his grandsons, Maurice and Edward, to join the gathering of the clans. Thither also sped his brave brother-in-arms, Lord Balmerino, with many whose hearts beat high with hope, as they advanced from various points, to meet each other at the great place of rendezvous in the valley.

Escorted by two companions belonging to the Macdonalds, a young man, with regular and well-formed features, fair-haired and of dignified mien, entered, at an early hour on the morning of that memorable raising of the standard, the narrow and sequestered ravine called the vale of Glenfinnan. On either side it was sealed by lofty and craggy mountains, between which the little river Finnan wended its silent way to the sea. The desolate loneliness of the scene impressed the heart of the adventurous Prince with awe; but the silence was at last broken by the stirring sounds of the pibroch, and soon a body of seven hundred Highlanders rapidly descended the mountain paths from various directions, and loud and joyously rose the strains of their national music.

A mound in the centre of this romantic valley was chosen

* Hist. of Rebellion of 1745.

as a fitting spot for the raising of the standard, and a monument, bearing a Latin inscription, still points out the spot to posterity.

As the crimson silk banner, with a white centre, on which was written the celebrated motto, *Tandem Triumphans*, was unfurled by the aged Marquis of Tullibardine, and waved in the fresh breeze of the mountains, the Highlanders made the air echo with their acclamations. Bending beneath the infirmities of age, the Marquis craved support. Two Highlanders advanced and stood on either side, and the old man read in a clear voice the manifesto of the old Chevalier, exhorting his subjects to join the standard of their lawful sovereign, setting forth the grievances his people had suffered under the new dynasty, and expressing his resolve to redress them, as also to maintain all existing privileges.

This document was dated at Rome, and signed James the Eighth. Another was afterwards read, in which James commissioned his son to act as Regent. The young Prince then presented himself to the enthusiastic soldiers, and made them a short but animated speech.

It was a proud and happy moment for Charles when he joined the veterans who had followed him, and the brave men who had accompanied him from France, to hear that on the same day on which his standard was raised his small army was reinforced by Macdonald of Kappoeh, with three hundred of his clan, and the next day by Macdonald of Glencoe with a hundred and fifty, by the Stewarts of Appin, under Ardshiel, with two hundred, and by Glengary the younger with about the same number.

And yet there were many, and amongst them was the Prince himself, who ascended the mountainous paths leading from the valley, after the raising of the standard, with anxious and throbbing hearts. The House of Hanover had firm

possession of the throne, the troubles of 1715 were fresh in the minds of many present, either they or their parents having been involved in that unfortunate attempt to place James on the throne of his forefathers, and they were again about to stake their fortunes, their estates, nay, their very lives, in pursuance of the same object.



CHAPTER II.

THE BETROTHAL.



PROMISE you, fair Marion, that as soon as my duty to the Prince is at an end, I will beg your uncle to bestow your hand upon me, and, in token of our betrothal, suffer me to place a ring upon your finger. May the day not be long distant when I may have the happiness of placing there in its stead a simple circlet of gold."

The young girl whom Edward, the younger of the Marshal's grandsons, thus addressed had but few pretensions to beauty, but her figure was faultless, and though her features were far from regular, there was a sweet and pleasant expression in the face of Marion Chalmers which amply atoned for their lack of beauty.

They stood beneath the walls of an old castle not far from Inverness. It was the residence of Arthur Elphinstone, Lord Balmerino, and this young lady was the niece of his wife.

Marion's fingers had fashioned the white cockade with which his cap was adorned, she had seen her veteran uncle go forth to the vale of Glenfinnan with all the enthusiasm of the Scottish women of the period, and yet her heart sank within her as Edward St. John bade her farewell for an indefinite period. They stood beside the dry moat, the sides of which were thickly planted with shrubs, and as Marion looked up at the castle windows, burnished with the glories of the setting sun, she said :

"I mind me, Edward, 'twas just on so fair an evening as this I arrived with my dear uncle at the old chateau at St. Germains. Sad enough would my lot have been had he not

bade my aunt rear me as her own child, and that same adoption of myself leads me to think about those foster-sisters, Margaret and Isabel, of whom I heard Lady Florence speak so often. Have your family ever heard from Margaret Lindsey? or, will the mystery that drove Isabel from your father's roof ever be cleared up, think you?"

"Humanly speaking, Marion, when we take into consideration that ten years have passed, I think there is but little chance of such a finale. My brother Maurice was far more tenderly attached to Isabel than my family imagined; nay, it is quite possible he may never marry should that mystery never be solved."

"But was it not to be lamented, Edward, that, aware of the affection with which Lady Florence regarded her, unbroken even by that strange affair, Isabel should have fled from the chateau as she did?"

"It is hard to say, Marion. Supposing she was not in fault beyond having granted those stolen interviews (there was, of course, always a doubt against her in the minds of others), who was that man? when and in what way did she first become acquainted him? and having made his acquaintance, then comes the why and the wherefore of an oath being necessary, unless to shield from the law some guilty person? Then the theft of the jewels and a large sum of money, together with the letters Margaret Lindsey had secured, contributed, one thing taken with another, to make people look coldly upon her. That was not the case, however, with our own family, and believing, as we have always firmly believed, in her innocence, I can well understand that, as years passed on, and, for some inscrutable reason, her lips still remained sealed, why she should have taken such a step as to leave her home."

"How terrible for a cloud to settle on the character of an

innocent woman, Edward! And yet it is, and must ever be, that by our actions we are judged. Poor Isabel! I wonder will the truth ever be known? How old is she, and do you think Maurice will ever marry?"

"My fair querist, you have asked me two questions at once. Isabel was born in the year 1715, and as this is the year of grace 1745, you see she must be now thirty years of age. As to your second question, I must reply in the negative. My brother is not likely *ever* to marry unless he after all wed with the object of his first choice. But time wears on. Marion, I must bid you farewell."

"My mind is full of fear on your account and that of my dear uncle. He has been an exile for twenty years already in the cause of the Stuarts. Is it to be wondered at that my aunt and myself are tormented with the most melancholy presentiments? But to return to your own movements. Where do you join the Prince, Edward?"

"In Edinburgh. He intends to take up his quarters within two miles of the city. My brother and grandfather are already on their way thither."

"And you ought to have joined them ere this, Edward St. John, instead of losing your time in making pretty speeches to my niece," said Lady Balmerino, now making her appearance through a thicket of trees hard by, near which she had been seated. "And I beg to remind you, Marion," added she, "that the harvest moon is up," and she pointed to the glorious luminary, now rising beyond the grey walls of the old mansion, "and that Edward's steed has been neighing at the gate this half hour, and I have become weary of waiting for you. So, young people, I charge you make your adieu as speedily as possible; the more brief the parting the better for both of you; and God send it may herald a happy meeting."

Fair Marion Chalmers did not, indeed, endorse her aunt's wise view of the question, but was yet obliged to yield to that better judgment which decreed that the painful word, "Farewell," should be pronounced without further delay, and again bonny Marion and Edward St. John renewed, in the elder lady's presence, their vows of everlasting constancy, and, amidst words of hope and encouragement on his part, they reached the gate, and vaulting gracefully into his saddle, he set spurs to his steed and was swiftly out of sight.

Long stood Marion, straining her eyes in the far distance. The flood of silvery light gleamed on the summits of the mountain height, on loch and glen, shedding its radiance over the verdant meadows and rich lands, fertile in wood and water, that stretched beyond and around her Highland home, and again revealing on the rising ground the solitary horseman in the distance, till a bend in the road shut him from her view.

It was the darling wish of Lady Balmerino's heart that the niece whom she had adopted in her childhood, *not* because she was deprived by death of her natural protectors, but because her father had lost his fortune in the rebellion of 1715, should be united in marriage with the grandson of her husband's old friend and brother in arms, Sir Reginald St. John. Lady Balmerino had great misgivings as to the result of the present enterprise, but she kept her apprehensions locked within her own bosom. At the same time she was one of the most enthusiastic of the Scottish ladies, and had sold her jewels, in common with others, in order to contribute towards the funds required for the use of the Prince. Indeed by far the greater number of the women of Scotland were devoted adherents to the cause of bonny prince Charlie. Young, handsome, chivalrous, and unfortunate, it was small wonder that he should have been regarded with so deep an

interest by women when we remember that the hearts of the grave and the aged of his own sex were alike enlisted in his favor.

Weary waiting and watching it must have been in those days, when there were no penny broadsheets reaching as now even to the most remote localities, no electric telegraph, no railways bringing distance near, no speedy and well-organized postal system, and many weary weeks to pass ere reliable news could penetrate to places like this old mansion in the wilds of Inverness.

When at last missives did arrive, they became informed of the routing of the Edinburgh town-guards and dragoons under Colonel Gardiner, that Locheil and his Highlanders had made themselves masters of the city, that the Prince had entered in triumph the ancient kingdom of his forefathers, of the grand ball held in Holyrood palace, that Charles was received enthusiastically by the great bulk of the people, and that, at the head of his small army, he was about to march towards the enemy and force Sir John Cope, who was on his way from the north, to an immediate engagement. "Keep your mind at rest, dearest Marion," so concluded young St. John's epistle, "we are full of hope that we shall soon obtain a victory and before long establish the Prince on the throne of his forefathers."

Less of the expression of sanguine expectation was there in the few hurried lines addressed to Lady Balmerino by her husband, but he bade her hope the best, and promised to write again at the earliest opportunity.



CHAPTER III.

THE BATTLE OF PRESTON PANS.



ONSENSE, George, you will see we shall win the day. What will that wild and barbarous horde avail against our disciplined and well-trained soldiers?"

Thus spoke the English General, Sir John Cope, to one of the officers under his command.

" Nevertheless, Sir John, I cannot feel sanguine. Those same wild mountaineers bear a high character for endurance of hardship and steadiness of resolve. Their ardor and enthusiasm will perhaps more than atone for other deficiencies. If so, it will be a sorry matter for us."

" You are a downright bird of ill-omen, forever croaking presages of ill," observed Sir John. " Remember, we do not intend to enact the disgraceful scene at Colt Bridge here. Our infantry will strike terror into the hearts of the rude and undisciplined forces we are about to encounter. I regard them with unqualified contempt."

It was a misty morning, cold and frosty, on which Sir John prepared to lead his troops against the army of Charles Edward, at Gladsmuir, or Preston Pans, as it was afterwards called.

Well, indeed, might the General and his men have looked down upon the rude mass about to confront them with other feelings than those of fear if they relied only on the undisciplined state of the enemy.

Even as Sir John spoke the last words, the sun shone out, and the mist of the early morning rapidly clearing away, the General beheld the Highland army, its line broken up into clusters, whilst that of his own infantry presented the appearance of a compact and solid mass.

Riding rapidly along the front of his line, he addressed words of encouragement to his men, for the clans were preparing for the charge, as reverently removing their bonnets they for a moment paused in prayer, and then their famous war-cry resounded through the air, mingled with the wild din of the pibroch.

Reckless in their impetuosity, they dashed madly forwards, their wild valor *not* responded to by the English soldiers, who were wholly unprepared for the desperate charge that ensued, for, drawing their swords, and grasping in the left hand the dirk and target, the Stuarts and Camerons the foremost of the foe, rushed forward and beheld the English artillery fly disgracefully from the field.

Sir John Cope and the aged Colonel Gardiner, aware that their sole chance rested between flight and a brave resistance, shouted in tones of thunder to their followers, encouraging and exhorting them by their own example.

With wild and frantic energy, born out of their ardent enthusiasm, the mountaineers rush onwards in the thick of the fight, aiming at the noses of the enemy's horses with their swords, by which they caused them to rear, start, or wheel suddenly round, throwing the whole army into inextricable confusion.

Is there anything in what are called presentiments? Amidst the first brought to the ground, beneath his own horse, was the cavalry officer who had differed with his general that morning as to their chances of success.

"Perdition seize the cowardly scoundrels," said Sir John, beneath his set teeth, as he beheld his disciplined troops betaking themselves to a shameful flight before the rude Highland forces. But yet again he hoped, for the infantry at once poured forth a volley of shot which did fearful execution.

But onward, still onward, press the wild Highland clans, grappling with the enemy in hand to hand combat, till at length the latter, seized by the same panie which had caused their companions to make a disgraceful flight, also fled from the field, and a scene of the wildest confusion at once ensued.

But a very small party of English infantry, left without any commander, remained true to their colors on that eventful day of the battle of Preston Pans, and won for themselves the commendation of the unfortunate Colonel Gardiner, who, exhorting them to continue the contest, met with his own death by a blow from the broadsword of a Highlander on the back of his head.

The Prince was elated with his cheaply bought victory, and, wearing the Highland dress, a blue bonnet on his head, and a St. Andrew's cross on his breast, he traversed the field whereon lay the dead and the wounded; but, with a truly noble spirit he refrained from any unseemly exultation, rather betraying sorrow for the misfortunes of those whom he termed "his father's deluded subjects," and, with Maurice St. John, the Marshal and Lord George Murray, he was busily devising plans for the comfort of the wounded when a sturdy, thick-set Highlander made his appearance, bringing with him no less than ten English soldiers, whom he had contrived to make his prisoners.

The unmitigated rage of these unfortunate men may be better conceived than described. Their valor had been proved, for they had fought bravely on the plains of Döttingen and Fontenoy; and yet, panie-stricken, they had suffered themselves to be captured by one man.

"These ten shentelmens, your Highness," said Dugald, of the clan Gregor, making an awkward reverence to the Prince, "these ten shentelmens didna ken preccesly whilk

way to rin, sac I made sac bauld as to take the liperty of pringing them to your Highness."

With an almost unparalelled rashness, Dugald had pursued alone this small party, and striking one of them down, had commanded them to lay aside their arms. The terror-stricken soldiers had obeyed, and suffered themselves to be made prisoners by a single man grasping a sword in one hand and a pistol in the other.

Then, after the Prince had extolled his courage and ordered the prisoners into safe but kindly keeping, the Highlander resumed :

"And if his Highness will pe so goot as to excuse my abrupt departure, as I maun gang to a Sassenach soldier tat I hae carried into a pit hut, forbyc, the creature asked me to pring to him Colonel Maurice—Maurice, fat ta deil, the name has rin elane out o' my head," and here Dugald ran his fingers through his thick, sandy locks, as if he thought the action would refresh his memory.

"Was St. John the name?" said Maurice, stepping forward from the knot of officers that had gathered round the Prince.

"To pe sure, sir, tat was ta name," replied Dugald, adding, "if I may take ta liperty of asking ta shentelman to gang wi me, I will peg him to pe quick, as ta puir mon is wrastling wi death. I would be uno glad to ken fat business the fule earle had to pe fighting at all."



CHAPTER IV.

THE CONFESSION.

ACCOMPANIED by Colonel St. John, whose curiosity was excited, and who vainly hazarded a conjecture as to who amongst the English soldiers could have sent for him, he left the field in company with the Highlander, and after a sharp walk of about a quarter of a mile, the latter conducted him to a hut, built of round stones, without cement, and thatched with sod, on entering which, as soon as the smoke from the peat fire which burned on the earthen floor in the middle of the hovel had cleared away, he beheld, stretched on the ground, a man about thirty-five years of age, with the expression of whose features he seemed familiar, though not aware that he had ever met him before.

Leaning over him, and endeavoring to staunch a wound in his side, was the old man to whom the hut belonged. The face of the stranger was pallid from loss of blood and approaching dissolution ; his blue eyes were dim, his fair, brown hair, that clustered over his temples, was marked with the stain of blood.

For a moment the dim eyes were fixed on Maurice with an uneasy stare, then he beckoned him to his side.

"I am not known to you, Colonel St. John," said he, in a low voice, " nevertheless, I have much to tell you, and I must be quick, for I am quite aware that I am a dying man. But, before I begin what I have to say, can you tell me if Sir John Cope has escaped ? "

Maurice replied in the negative.

"It is well," he said, with a melancholy smile, " his expedient of adopting the white cockade in a moment of

peril has, I hope, earried him unharmed through your savage Highland elans; but to the point. I must make a clean breast before I die. I owe reparation to you and yours, and, such as it is, I must make it quickly."

Much surprised, Maurice, with folded arms and thoughtful brow, silently regarded the stranger. Then, as if a sudden thought oeeurred to him, he said :

" Do you wish your eommunieation to be private ? " and, as he spoke, he glanced significantly at Dugald and then at the old man.

" He only understands Gaelie," was the reply, " and as to the other, he rendered me good service bearing me hither and then fetching you to me, so let him remain."

" Fat for ? " said the Highlander, " Dugald MacGregor is nae the mon to fash himself aboot t' seerets o' ither folk ; he's a shentelman, aboon all sic ways."

As he spoke, he left the hut, and after a moment's pause, the stranger began as follows :

" My evil fortune, Colonel St. John, ordained that I should take the life, some ten years since, of a gallant French officer, the beloved friend of the king, and also your own assoeiate and companion—I allude to Count de Foix, whose death both of you bitterly deplored."

The eountenance of Maurice was at once clouded by this allusion to his friend's untimely death, and he started on finding himself in the presence of one whom the emissaries of the King of France had sought for long and vainly.

After a pause, during which the stranger was evidently gathering courage to proceed, he continued :

" The Marshal St. John and his Lady adopted, in her infancy, the orphan child of a certain Major Fitzgerald, bringing her up as their own daughter."

Again he paused, as if awaiting a reply.

" They did," responded the Colonel.

"About the time of De Foix's death a shadow fell over the character of this girl, but she was the innocent tool, Colonel St. John, of an unscrupulous villain; she was affianced to yourself, but you could not wed with one whose fair fame was tarnished, nor would she desire it, but on the word of a dying man, I declare Isabel, in thought, word or deed, innocent of ill as is the unborn babe."

"Gracious Heavens! what do I hear?" said Maurice, striking his forehead with his clenched hand, and he strode without the hut, as if he could relieve his mind by breathing another atmosphere than that inhaled in common with the dying wretch to whose tale he was listening.

The honest Highlander, who had taken his stand without, was surprised at the palor of his countenance.

"My Cot!" he said, in a low voice, "the shentelman maun pe listening to an unco awfu tale."

After a moment passed in the open air, Maurice re-entered the hut.

"Beyond the terrible doubt which, I am quite aware, must have existed on the minds of all," resumed the stranger, "as to the purity of Isabel Fitzgerald, she must also, to a certain extent, have appeared to be mixed up with a matter which involved a very heavy loss to Lady Florence St. John, a rather extensive robbery having been perpetrated about the same time, whilst your family were absent from the chateau."

At this point of the stranger's recital, Maurice could restrain himself no longer.

"Who are you, sir?" he exclaimed; "disclose to me your name. Good Heavens! my poor love, my Isabel, how bitterly have you been made to suffer."

A deep groan burst from the lips of the dying man.

"Listen; I am making the only reparation in my power,"

said he, "God is merciful to forgive, Colonel St. John; I am the wretched unworthy brother of this unfortunate Isabel."

"Can it be possible?"

"The words I utter are as true, as that before yonder sun shall set, I shall stand in the presence of my Maker; attend to what I say. The father of Isabel was twice married. He had a child, a boy of some seven years of age, living under the care of a maiden aunt at the time of the Rebellion of 1715, a short time before which he had married again. His son now lies before you, Colonel St. John, mortally wounded by one of your wild mountaineers.

"As I advanced to manhood, I became extravagant and dissolute. My aunt's death placed me in possession of a handsome fortune, the greater portion of which was lost at the gaming table, and the remainder squandered in Paris amongst the gay and profligate nobility who flocked about the French court.

"A bitter feud existed between myself and de Foix, arising out of what may be termed an *affaire de coeur*. It was in no fairly fought duel, alas! that my rival fell; one word begot another, mutual recrimination followed, and in a fit of jealous rage I stabbed him to the heart.

"I dreaded the anger of the King, de Foix being one of his most favored friends. I knew my life would pay the forfeit of my crime were I discovered, and my aunt having told me of the relationship that existed between myself and the young lady whom the Marshal and his Lady had adopted in her infancy, I resolved, under the cover of night, to escape to St. Germain's and introduce myself to her, with the hope that she might be able to supply me with funds wherewith to make my way to England, intending to enter the service of the King."

"Of the Elector, you mean, George of Hanover?"

"Exactly so; it mattered not to me whether Guelph or Stuart sat on the throne; all I wanted was to get out of that infernal France; that was all I cared about."

"And to compass your ends, was it you, then, who induced that unfortunate, timid girl to seal her lips with a vow of secrecy? Oh, my God! Thy ways are indeed inscrutable; how has every hope of her life been blasted."

"I beseech you, sir, spare me these comments on the shortcomings of my past life. I am quite aware it was all very wrong," said the dying wretch, in a tone rather leaning to the ludicrous than otherwise; "wait a while, at least, and say out your say when my tale is ended:

"I did induce her to take an oath of secrecy. I told her that yourself and de Foix were bosom friends. Through the medium of my man Jacques, I once laid *perdu* in the old palace of St. Germain for some weeks; whilst there she brought me articles of value belonging to herself in the way of jewelry; these I promised not to sell, but was to raise money on for my use and return them later. She also conveyed to me her little stock of money.

"Time passed on. I was taken alarmingly ill, the bloodhounds of the law were on my track, and I endeavored to convince her that such help as she could afford was useless, that painful as it might be to her feelings to adopt means such as she might perhaps deem dishonorable, she should not hesitate when the safety of her own brother was at stake (I had concealed from her that our relationship was only half blood). I urged her to resort to any expedient rather than place me in peril, and trust to me to set things right later."

At this point, the words, "My poor, unhappy Isabel," burst from the Colonel's lips.

"Oh, she took every care of herself, I assure you. She

would not yield an inch where honor and virtue and all those fine sentiments were concerned, and the myrmidons of the law would have had me in their toils, no doubt, had I been half so scrupulous; but, recognizing the principle that self-preservation is the first law of nature, I adopted a plan, sufficiently repugnant to the feelings of a gentleman, but, at the same time, my only resource."

There was a moment's pause, and the Colonel exclaimed :
"Gracious Heavens ! sir, was it *you* who committed the burglary at the chateau ?"

"Pray, Colonel St. John, do not shock me by using such a word in connection with any act of mine," said the miserable wretch ; "at the same time, I thank you very much for having spared me from entering into details which, really, to a gentleman like myself, of refined and cultivated mind, are particularly painful. It was even so; I did, uninvited, visit your paternal home, under the cover of night, and appropriate to my own use, as a loan, certain sums of money and articles of jewelry, which I have never become rich enough to return, fortune being against me, by the way, all my life. I have now to pay the debt of nature to that inexorable tyrant, death, who you well know will take no denial from any of us; but take my word, sir, that thief of a Jew money-lender, Isaac Levy, of Aldgate, is quite as hard a creditor. Year after year I have considered it a point of honor to pay his exorbitant rate of interest for money advanced on those jewels I borrowed of Lady Florence and my sister, and not one farthing of the original loan, wherewith to redeem them, have I been able to scratch together; however, I will give you the documents."

It was not without many pauses that the dying spendthrift had delivered himself of this long narration; and

now he signed to the old man to extricate, from around his waist, a belt which he wore over his shirt, within which a small paeket had been carefully stiched.

"With these documents, Colonel, the jewels may be redeemed," he continued, "and I hope my escapade at St. Germain will not in the end injure the lady with whom I can claim kindred. She loved me, I really believe; also, I *think* she did all in her power to help me, consistently with her very exalted ideas of right and wrong."

"She did more, far more, than she ought to have done, sir," said the Colonel, in tones of deep disgust, "in allowing her lips to be bound by a solemn oath, and in meeting *you* at the risk of incurring a slur on her own spotless fame, but, God help me, I forget I am speaking to a man wrestling in the arms of death," he added, observing a dark shadow pass over the unhappy man's features.

"I have been a sad seamp, Colonel, reckless and heartless; repentance has come too late."

"Repentance is *never* too late, Fitzgerald," said the subdued and softened Colonel. "We are in the midst of blood and desolation; would that I had it in my power to bring you some worthy priest, but, alas! I cannot. I, too, am but a rough soldier, but I beg you to turn your heart to God."

"And Isabel, poor Isabel. I did not care for the sister whom I had never known; I used her for my own selfish purposes. How fared it with her? I never thought she would consider herself bound to keep that vow after I had gone."

"Stung at the undeserved coldness of persons *not* of my own immediate family, she, of herself, broke the engagement that subsisted between us, and when, after the lapse of two years, she never heard from you, she left her home

clandestinely and sought refuge in a convent. As soon as I can leave this placee for France I shall hasten to her, with what purpose you may well conceive."

"God be praised! allow me to clasp your hand within my own. Say that you forgive me."

"Ten years of our lives we have known happiness but by name," was the reply. "I have felt myself a moody, disappointed man; *she* has never ceased to pray that the cloud might be removed that had fallen upon her spotless innocence. Gladly would I have wedded her, firm in my belief in her virtue, but she ever persistently refused. But brighter days may be yet in store for my poor, heart-broken love, and I forgive you, Fitzgerald, as I hope to be forgiven."

And then he who had scarce ever prayed since his happy boyhood strove to pray now. A dissolute spendthrift, a vain coxcomb, heartless, selfish, unprincipled, all this indeed he was, but still there were holy recollections garnered up in his memory. Again he was a little child, lisping out his prayers at the knee of the faithful woman who had supplied a mother's placee, prayers which for more than twenty years his lips had never uttered, but the remembrance of which came back to his mind in disjointed phrases, like a broken strain of music heard in far off years, the melody of which we still remember. Then he rambled on of old times, still recurring to the subject matter of his late confession. Now he was on the hillside at St. Germain, then holding a violent discussion with the Jew of Aldgate, then fighting valourously on the field of Preston Pans, and urging Sir John to wear the white cockade, and thus escape unharmed, as the odds of the day were against them.

Then there came a dead pause, the pale face assumed a grayish tinge, and a frightful convulsion shook the whole frame. At that moment Dugald entered the hut.

"Cot help us," he murmured, "tat is fat hersell maun come to. Put it is an unco awfu' sight. Puir shentelman! he'll nae doubt pe dying. Fat a dismal noise in his thrapple, Colonel."

That terrible sound in the throat termed the "rattles" was what Dugald alluded to. The closing scene was at hand. "Will he die and make no sign?" thought the Colonel, who had offered up fervent aspirations for his conversion. Even at that moment the words "Lord have mercy upon me a sinner" burst forth, accompanied by a loud wailing cry, the cry of a penitent heart. Then there was a long gasp, and all was over.

"In the glorious light of God's boundless mercy may he stand forgiven!" said the Colonel, as he walked out into the clear bright sunshine.

* * * * *

And before that sun had set, honest Dugald, of the Clan MacGregor, had with his own hands dug a grave near the field of Gladsmuir, and, with the help of the old man to whom the hut belonged, had deposited within it the remains of George Fitzgerald. The Colonel liberally recompensed them, and then hastened to seek the Marshal, in order to acquaint him with the events of the morning.

On that eventful day, however, it was almost impossible to be a moment to themselves. He found the young Chevalier standing amidst his friends, habited in the simplest manner, his dress being neither more nor less than a coarse plaid; on his head he wore a blue bonnet, around which was a piece of plain gold lace; his boots and his knees, by the way, were very far from clean.

A few hours later, attended by several officers, he rode to the mansion of the Marquis of Tweedale, where they were to pass the night, and at length Maurice, finding him-

self alone with the Marshal, hastened to relate the confession of Fitzgerald, adding, "that he should repair to France as soon as possible, and claim Isabel as his affianced bride."

"But that day is yet far off, my poor Mauriee," said the Marshal. "We are now engaged in sharing the fortunes of war. It is impossible for you to leave Scotland at present."

Recognizing the unwelcome truth of the Marshal's words, Mauriee contented himself with inscribing a long epistle to the much-tried Isabel, with a full recital of his interview with her half-brother, together with another for the joint perusal of the ladies at St. Germains. Little did he think when he penned those letters that nearly another year would elapse before his dreams of happiness would be realized, or that his happiness would meet with alloy by the death of those whose hearts would have rejoiced to witness it.

Early on the following morning the clans marched into Edinburgh, parading the city to the Jacobite air, "The King shall enjoy his ain again." Their picturesque garb and wild appearance, their prisoners, the spoils of artillery and the baggage which followed in the rear, together with the banners and standards of the various clans, as also those which they had seized, rendered the sight exhilarating and imposing, and contributed to raise the hopes of the adherents of the Stuart race.



CHAPTER V.

THE SŒUR MADELEINE.



ARK! is it she, or only the Sister of Charity?
Has the summons come too late? Oh! that I
could clasp her in my loving arms once more,
my poor, innocent Isabel."

Thus spoke the aged Lady Florence, now suffering under mortal malady, and she listens attentively, as in the pausing of the gust she again fancies she hears the wheels of a vehicle coming up the avenue.

The bleak wind of a January evening, in the year 1746, blew keenly around the old chateau in the valley; it shook the latticed casements in their frames, and threatened destruction to the quaint old place itself. It was a dark night; not a glimpse of moonlight; but occasionally a few stars might be seen, ever and again obscured by the passing clouds which swept over them.

Lady Florence's sense of hearing had not deceived her; in the pauses of the gust she had really distinguished the sound of the wheels of a vehicle approaching the chateau.

In a moment the clang of the great bell resounded through the house, and a little later a waiting-maid entered the chamber to apprise the lady that the Sœur de la Charité had arrived.

A spacious old-fashioned room was that in which the Lady Florence sat, or rather reclined on a couch. There were three windows in the chamber, with latticed panes, placed within deep recesses, sufficiently wide to form a somewhat spacious and pleasant seat in the summer days, when these casements were garlanded by the starry flowers of the jasminc; but now, with every gust of wind, the leafless ten-

drils of the creeping plant beat against the glass, ever and again mingled with the driving sleet.

The antique and cumbrous furniture of the room accorded well with its oaken wainscot, diamond-shaped easements, and its huge bed with its heavy hangings of dark green satin; a rich Turkey carpet was on the floor; but the bright wood fire that burned in the ample stove, and the lighted wax candles on the table beside the now aged lady, failed to dispel its obscurity, its remote nooks and corners remaining in almost total darkness.

A rosary of oriental pearl with links of gold lay beside her, also an open book from which she had been reading, but her thoughts had wandered back to the past, to her youth, then to the early days of her wedded life; she thought of the old times when the chateau had rung with the merry voices of her own children, of her adopted daughters, of her grandsons, and clasping her hands together, she sighed forth the words: "Reginald, my husband, shall we ever meet again?"

As she spoke, the door was opened by the waiting-maid, who ushered in a Sister of Charity.

That most unattractive head-gear worn by the daughters of St. Vincent de Paul failed to disguise the loveliness of the countenance beneath, as did the dress of coarse black serge the demeanor and elegance of the wearer.

"I am glad to see you, my good Sister," said Lady Florence, "but I could have wished you had deferred your coming hither till the morrow; a tempestuous night indeed hath this been for a journey from your convent."

"Ah! Madam, a Sister of Charity, if her whole heart be in her holy calling, does not heed such trifles. I have traveled part of the road in a coach, too. Moreover, I am used, with all my Sisters, to brave the inclemencies of the weather."

"I am very glad to have you with me, Sister," said the lady after a pause. "The recent death of my beloved daughter-in-law, preceded by that of a friend, one Mistress Wilmot," and as she spoke, Lady Florence glanced at the sable robe she wore, "together with the absence of my husband and grandsons, render this old chateau but a gloomy residence. One is apt when alone to ponder over the past too much, for one's memory will be busy in spite of oneself. Methinks, Sister, it is one of the greatest sorrows of old age, this beholding all we have ever loved oftentimes drop from our side, as the withered leaves of autumn from the branches of the tree."

"True, Madam; but your Ladyship knoweth as well as myself that there is a balm in Gillead for the sorrow that you name. Our loved ones are only gone a little before us; we ourselves must surely follow; in the eye of faith, they are not dead but sleeping."

The death of Madame St. John had occurred but very recently, and a few tears rolled down the lady's face as the Sister spoke. Very pale was her countenance and marked by the traces of deep sorrow, and still there was a something inexplicably soft and sweet in the venerable features, together with the expression of a peace not born of earth.

The presence of the Sister was of itself sure to soothe the spirits of the invalid. As to recovery of health, her malady was of such a nature that it could not be expected.

Often, in the long hours which she afterwards passed in the society of the Sister, did Lady Florence gaze admiringly at her companion. She was a beautiful woman, with a regular cast of features and lustrous eyes, but an air of cold reserve seemed to mark her character, and she asked herself the question, had any smouldering fire ever burned beneath that calm and unimpassioned exterior? was there a story in

the life of the Sœur Madeleine? had she taken the veil when young and free from the world's contaminating influence, breaking with it at once, wholly and entirely because burning with the love of God? or, had she been drawn to it after having tasted, and found that its promises were deceitful, its pleasures vain? A woman lovely in form and feature, reticent very, and sparing in her speech, yet withal most kind and courteous, Lady Florence would have sorrowed much had the Sister been summoned to her convent; and still there was a something chilling and repellent at times in her demeanor which warded off every attempt to discover that very little of the past which she would have liked to know.

Meanwhile time passed on, and brought with it news that Isabel, whom Lady Florence so much desired to see, could not come to St. Germain till she had recovered from a severe illness by which she was attacked before the letter of Maurice, which brought back to her hope and happiness, had reached her hands.

If the Sister was reticent, and indeed it would not have been consonant with the character of the state she followed to have been forever prating of the past, Lady Florence was still the very soul of candor and frankness, as in the days of her youth, and so she would not unfrequently beguile the long, wearisome days of a portion of their tedium by stories of old times, of her girlhood in the Court of Queen Mary, of her happy wedded life in that same old chateau in which she had dwelt ever since her marriage.

The Sister, too, was a good listener, and as the invalid dwelt upon the past, she lent a not unwilling ear, sometimes even questioning, in a timid and delicate manner, when she wished for further information.

Then, with tears in her eyes, the lady told of the great

grief that came upon her when she lost her son and daughter, and pressing her hand on her heart, a prayer would tremble on her lips, beseeching God to spare the husband and grandchildren, who were now the last of their race.

"If Maurice does but come back to me again, I will see that his long-deferred marriage shall take place quickly," resumed the lady. "My innocent Isabel! how I long to embrace her, and to see her at last united to my grandson."

In a half-hesitating way, said the Sister, affirming rather than questioning :

"Your grandson, then, is engaged to be married, Madam ?"

"Yes, Sister, a long, protracted engagement it has been. He was betrothed eleven years since to a gentle girl whom I had adopted in her infancy. Indeed I had taken two orphan children to my arms; the one gentle and amiable, the other full of pride and passion. A wilful, headstrong damsels was that Margaret Lindsey," she added, as if speaking to herself, "but God knows I loved her too, imperious and stubborn as she was, and would like much to know of her well-being, though she has long since forgotten the protectress of her youth, for never tale or tidings have I of her since she bade me farewell in Edinburgh eleven long years ago. But I was going to tell you of Isabel. I had left those girls, or young women I might call them, in this chateau, whilst I, with the rest of my family, spent a few months in the Highlands of Scotland. On my return, Sister, a terrible tale was poured into my ears by Margaret, who was but too ready to think evil of her foster-sister. However, to be brief, it was but too true that this Isabel, whom we had so loved and trusted, and about whom it were hard to believe ill, had been in the habit of meeting by the hillside in the valley some stranger unknown to all of us,

had given him all her jewels and small stock of money, had tied herself to secersty by a solemn oath, and even in some way appeared to have been cognizant of the fact of his being concerned in a daring robbery at the chateau a few nights before the day of our return home."

Here Lady Florence for a moment paused, and the Sister observed:

"It was not *proved*, however, that this Margaret, of whom your Ladyship has told me, had spoken *falsely* concerning her foster-sister, was it, Madam?"

"Alas! no. For the time being, and, indeed, for all these long years have Isabel's lips remained sealed as to the past. Only very lately has it been made known to us that she was as innoeent of evil as—"

"Innoeent! Madam, can that be true?" eagerly exclaimed the usually calm and self-possessed Sister.

"I was about to say, Sister, she was innocent of evil as the babe unborn. During the late battle at Gladsmuir, my grandson, Maurice, was called to the death-bed of an English officer. He was one of the soldiers of the man they *call* King George. Oh! wonderful and inscrutable are the ways of God. Can you believe it, my good Sister, this man declared himself the half-brother of my poor Isabel, of whose existence even *we* were not aware. He had committed a crime in France for which he would have been condemned to death. He made himself known to my poor child, worked upon her feelings in various ways, extorted a vow of secersty, and, to fill up the measure of his iniquity, made a forcible entrance into the chateau; and aware, as she undoubtedly was, as to *who* was the nocturnal intruder, the fact of her being found in a swoon in this very room, in which the robbery was committed, clears up everything that has for years appeared to tell against her. Heaven knows

I never believed her guilty ; but others did. She keenly felt their coldness, and left us, almost without a word, to bury herself in the retirement of the convent in which she had been educated, until, as she afterwards wrote me, her innocence should be made manifest."

"Oh ! my God ! how sinful it is to judge one's neighbor from appearances," said the Sister.

Struck with the earnestness with which she spoke, Lady Florence raised her eyes. The Sister's face was shaded by her veil, but she remarked that her countenance was even paler than usual, and she beheld tears falling down her cheeks.

"My dear Sister Madeleine, how I thank you for your sympathy. Well, I have nearly finished my story. I had written my poor Isabel to come here immediately, not aware that she was ill; but as soon as Maurice returns they will be married. I have forgotten, however, to tell you, that from this attachment of Isabel and Maurice proceeded one of the causes of Margaret's aversion to her foster-sister. She had suffered her own heart to be taken captive, and it was hard to love her as I once did, Sister, because it was impossible to blind one's eyes to the fact that she felt a satisfaction in dragging forward every circumstance that could tend to the ruin of Isabel."

"And when did your Ladyship say that Isabel would be at the chateau ?"

And the pale, beautiful woman rose and turned aside to pour out a cordial for her patient.

"I hope very soon ; but do you not remember, Sister, I said that at present she was very ill ? Ah ! me, one fixes one's affections on the children whom we rear and love, but what sorrow are we often doomed to suffer on their account ! I have thought about that perverse, proud Margaret so often,

and sorrowed so much, wondering what her fate has been, for the end of her story, up to the time when we parted, was painful enough, and I try and banish it from my mind ; and I have also wept over Isabel's troubles, poor, silly girl, till my heart has been well nigh broken."

" But, your Ladyship, in His boundless mercy, God may have touched the hard, proud heart of Margaret and called it to Himself. Have you never thought that this may have been the case ? This Margaret must have been well and carefully reared, and as she advanced in life, grace may have been given to her to look back and sorrow over the errors of so proud and wilful a heart, and in lieu of that unrequited, earthly love, which she doubtless felt in the full force of her impulsive, passionate nature, when she *did* give her heart to God, with that gift she would taste an ecstasy of heavenly love, of which all earthly passion is but as the shadow, and out of that same love would spring a heartfelt sorrow and repentance."

As the Soeur Madeleine spoke these words, the natural beauty with which she was endowed seemed to become almost superhuman, the sentiments with which her heart was filled reflecting themselves in her countenance.

" You are right, Sister," said Lady Florence, warmly pressing the white and almost transparent hand which rested on her pillow ; " you are quite right, and I thank you for having inspired me with such a train of good and holy thoughts. My poor Margaret ! yes, it is quite true she may, if still alive, become, if not so already, eminent in holiness and virtue. God grant it may be so, and, for this end, do you add your pious aspirations to my own unworthy prayers. The day of my life is far spent, Sister. Oh, that it may be given me to behold yet once again those whom I love, my husband and my sons, with my adopted daugh-

ters, and then let me but hear that our rightful King has his own again, and I shall have no earthly wish ungratified."

"And now you must say no more, dearest Lady Florence. We will both unite in prayer for Margaret before we close our eyes this night, and, like a good nurse, I shall watch by you for awhile till you are asleep, and then I will take a little rest later. I am a light sleeper, as you know, and the slightest movement on your part will rouse me immediately, should you require attendance."

Then the Sister of Charity began to make her preparations for the night, and as her tall and elegant form, which even that coarse robe could not disguise, moved noiselessly about the room, the heart of Lady Florence rejoiced that this particular Sister had been the one selected to attend her in her illness by the Mother Superior of her convent. A something there was about her, too, which forcibly recalled to her remembrance the unworthy daughter of her adoption, the cast of features, so classically regular in their outline, being the same; but there the likeness ended. There was nothing of Margaret in the subdued expression of those features, in the timid and downcast look of the meek and humble Sister, nor between the slender Margaret, quick and light of step, and the staid, majestic woman who hovered near her, and yet—and yet, the Sister of Charity ever and again brought Margaret more present to her mind, ever, in some little trifling way, awakening a remembrance. Thus ran the current of the aged Lady's thoughts both before, and after, having joined the Sister in prayer for her former *protégée*, till she lost herself in sleep.

The old clock in the turret had struck the hour of midnight. Lady Florence was buried in a profound sleep, the rest of the small household, consisting only of servants, for times had indeed changed, had gone to rest, but the Sister kept watch, watch not only over the invalid but over *Self*.

With folded hands she had sat her down to think over an unforgotten past. The early days of childhood are hers again, the stormy youth, the passionate womanhood, the sin, never to be forgotten, wrought by one master passion, with which even now she wrestles ; the red spot on the pale cheek and the rigidly clasped hands clearly tell the tale.

For a moment, only. Then, like the Magdalen of old, whose name, out of devotion to that great penitent, the Sister bears, love wins for her the victory. See, she draws the erueifix from her side, and, her eyes swimming in tears, she bows down her head, and after a moment spent in silent contemplation she is herself again.

“ My Love, my erueified Love, shall I shrink from the very cross I have so long sought after ? Strengthen me to accept it cheerfully, nay, gladly, for this *can* but be *the beginning of the end.*”



CHAPTER VI.

BAFFLED HOPES.



OTWITHSTANDING the hopes of Maurice St. John to the contrary, many weary months passed after the discovery of the innocence of Isabel before there could be any possibility of their meeting each other.

The victory won by Charles Edward's troops at Preston Pans filled him with an earnest desire to march into England, rightly judging that to remain longer in supineness in Edinburgh, whilst a superior force was preparing to meet him, must lead to fatal results. But such a course was violently opposed by the Highland chieftains; also by the humbler clansmen, who entertained a superstitious horror of being taken across the border.

After a faint show of resistance, Carlisle surrendered to the Duke of Perth, and the keys were delivered to Charles, at the little town of Brampton, by the Mayor and Aldermen on their knees.

During his march southward, the greatest good order and the strictest discipline were maintained; every article, however trifling, being promptly paid for, the poor Chevalier himself being the first to set the example to his people, who, by his orders, rigorously abstained from pilfering or plunder.

The Highland army marched out of Penrith with the various clans in their picturesque costumes, commanded by Charles Edward himself; whilst to Lord George Murray was assigned the regiments which had been raised in the Lowlands.

At the head of his men marched the Prince, clad in his

Highland costume, and with his shield slung across his shoulders. In lieu of the hideous periwig he wore his own fair hair; his complexion was dark, and his open countenance and bright lively eyes interested all who beheld him.

In common with the humblest of his followers he shared all the fatigues and privations of the march. As to dinner, he was never known to partake of one, his principal meal being his supper; then he would throw himself on his bed without undressing, and generally rise the next morning at four. Daring and intrepid, no obstacle daunted him. Thus, on finding, when he reached the Mersey, that the bridges were all broken, he forded the stream at the head of his division, though the water reached his middle. Only on one occasion is he said to have been overcome with fatigue.*

At Manchester, he was received with acclamations of joy. Throngs of people presented themselves to kiss his hand and make him offers of service. Bonfires burned in the streets, the bells were rung in the churches, thousands of the townspeople wore the white cockade, and, amidst a band of chieftains and gentlemen, he entered the town on foot, arrayed in a light tartan plaid, his belt and blue sash, and with a blue velvet bonnet, ornamented with a knot of white ribbons, on the side of his head, beneath which strayed a mass of yellow hair.†

He then took up his quarters in a large house in Market street. For many years afterwards it was still called the Palace. Later it was converted into an inn, and has since been pulled down.

A body of about two hundred men were here assembled

* On this occasion, when between Penrith and Shap, he walked for several miles half asleep, leaning on the shoulder of one of the clan, Ogilvie, to prevent himself from falling.—*Chamber's Hist. of Rebellion*.

† Reception awarded to the Prince at Manchester, &c.—See *Chamber's Rebellion*.

together, and Mr. Townley, a Roman Catholic gentleman of ancient family and considerable literary attainments, was appointed their colonel.

With colors flying and bagpipes playing, Charles Edward then made his entry in the town of Derby, and was received by the people with every demonstration of attachment as at Manchester.

But the King's army, amounting to 12,700 men, was drawing near him, and the news of the approach of the veteran regiments, commanded by the Duke of Cumberland, filled the minds of all with alarm. Not only did his army double that of the unfortunate Prince, but another of 6,000 men, under Marshal Wade, was skirting the western side of Yorkshir , whilst a camp was forming at Finchley for the protection of London ; George the II declaring his intention of taking the field in person at the head of this forcee.

Still sanguine, Charles resolved in his own mind not to stay and give battle to the Duke, but to hasten on to London, confront the forces of George, and make himself master of the Capital.

But, alas ! for his hopes and desires. With Lord George Murray at their head, the commanders of the several battallions, to his unfeigned surprise, urged him to return to Scotland. There was no evidence, they insisted, of a general rising amongst the English ; no descent, in their favor, from France.

The Duke of Perth alone took no part in these debates. Leaning his head against the fireplace, he heard the disputes without a word, but at last declared himself of the opinion of the other chiefs.

"Rather than go back at such a crisis," exclaimed Charles, vehemently, " I would wish to be twenty feet under ground. Let me entreat you, gentlemen. to consider what it is you ask of me."

But vainly did he argue and entreat. His remonstrances were disregarded by his council, which he at last broke up in silent indignation and open and avowed disgust.

He then had recourse to another expedient. He sent for each individual member, and remonstrated with him in private, but with the solitary exception of the Marshal, he found one and all inflexible.

The evening of the day so full of anxiety to Charles Edward was drawing nigh, when he hastily summoned another council, and an air of the deepest dejection sat upon his countenance as he approached the council-table.

"Gentlemen," said the Prince, "I am prepared to return at once with you to Scotland, and," he added, in a tone of mingled bitterness and vexation, "this council will be the last I shall ever hold. Henceforward I hold myself responsible for my actions only to God and my father."

Unfortunate Charles Edward! how little was he aware when he consented to allow those timid men to drag him away from Derby, that ten thousand French troops, headed by his brother Henry, were about to land on the south coast of England. Little did he know that the premier peer of Great Britain, whose example would doubtless have been followed by most of the influential Catholics, was on the very point of declaring himself in his favor; that many Welsh gentlemen had already left their homes to join him; and that a messenger was actually on his way from Lord Barrymore and Sir Watkin William Wynne, not only assuring him of their fidelity, but also pledging themselves to join him at whatever spot and in any manner he might please.*

It may be considered as highly probable that had the Prince really been allowed to push on to London as he desired, the dynasty of Great Britain might have been

* Chambers, p. 56.

changed, and the Stuarts again have held their court at Whitehall.

As it was, the retreat from Derby sealed the fate of Charles Edward and his followers. The embarkation of the French troops was at once countermanded, and the English Jacobites remained in their quiet homes.*

Then commenced the mournful march from Derby, and not till after the dawn of a new day revealed to them the familiar objects they had so recently passed did the Highlanders become aware that their chieftains were leading them back, when the rage and vexation to which the dispirited men gave free vent almost exceeded that of their broken-hearted Prince, the whole army resounding with expressions of sorrow and anger.

Alas! the case was altered now with the ill-fated Chevalier. He was like the generality of sanguine persons, who, when a reverse of fortune happens, yield to the most terrible depression.

"This change is terrible," said Maurice to the aged Marshal, as he watched the Prince, who, miserable and dejected, instead of sharing the fatigues of his men on foot as formerly, now lingered gloomily behind till the army was in advance of him, riding forward only by fits and starts to take his place at the head of the column, and then after awhile falling back.

With the majority of the English Jacobites, the position of the Marshal and Maurice was critical enough. At present they could not think of leaving the cause in which they had again taken up arms by escaping to France, but decided on retreating with the Highlanders to the fastnesses of their mountains rather than trust, as some few did and were proscribed for so doing, to the tender mercies of the Government.

* Jesse's Hist. Pretenders.

CHAPTER VII.

OUT OF DANGER.

AND what weather to travel in, my dear Marion!" said Lady Balmerino, as she looked out one cold, misty morning on a cheerless and dreary prospect. "It is enough to give us the ague for life. My love, take heart and postpone our intended journey. You see we have been kept in ignorance of Edward's illness till the worst was over."

And fair Marion Chalmers heard and heeded not. When did passionate youth ever listen willingly to the calm reasoning of those of maturer years?

Starting from her seat, she stands beside the elder lady, and grasping both hands of Lady Balmerino within her own, she exclaims with eager vehemence :

"If you ever loved me, aunt, you will not thwart my wishes. To Edinburgh I must go without delay. As soon attempt to stem the torrent in its course as to keep me in this place quiet and inactive when Edward is languishing and dying, perhaps, amongst strangers."

Lady Balmerino made no reply, but ringing a bell, she ordered a man-servant to be in readiness, and two horses to be saddled for herself and her niecee, together with a portmanteau containing the necessary requisites for a journey.

Two hours later, the ladies, escoorted by a man on horseback, rode out of the valley in which the house was situated, and in a short time arrived at the town of Inverness, and from thence made their way to Edinburgh with what speed they best might in the bad weather and unsettled state of the country.

Within a few days of his arrival in Edinburgh, after writing the letter I have spoken of to Marion, Edward St.

John had been seized with a dangerous illness, and in the hope of leaving his grandson in the care of persons whom he already knew, the Marshal had turned his steps to the old house in the Edinburgh Close.

But it had passed into other hands, and nearly all its former inmates had gone away, no one knew whither; only this much could they tell respecting those who had rented the Flat in which his family had once occupied apartments, namely: that the widow of David Graham had not very long survived her husband, and that his daughter had gone away and left no trace of her whereabouts.

Desirous for tidings of his former *protégée*, the Marshal enquired could they direct him to the residence of one Miss Lindsey, who was with the Grahams when the old man died?

The persons to whom he addressed himself, however, remembered nothing beyond having a vague recollection of a very haughty and beautiful woman to whom Mrs. Graham attributed her husband's death, and who had gone away before the death of the widow.

There was no alternative but to leave Edward in the care of strangers, with the hope that as he was willing to pay a heavy price he would be well and properly cared for.

The gloom of the winter afternoon was fast deepening into night when Marion and her aunt entered the sick room of young St. John. The crisis of his disorder was past, but it had left him feeble, emaciated, and worn almost to a shadow. So unlike was the spectral form before her to that of him whom she had parted from a few months' since, that Marion fairly broke down, and gave way to a fit of hysterical weeping, for which she was chided by her much more sensible aunt. From the moment of their arrival, however, a perceptible change for the better ensued. Attention had not indeed been wanting, but he was alone, dying he at one

time thought, amongst strangers, and his heart yearned once again for the society of those he loved.

And at length the frail tenure of life, which so long had trembled in the balance, was again fairly restored, but with each day came an anxious, eager wish, which not even the presence of Marion could quell, that he had not been condemned perforce to inaction instead of being on the battle-field.

"I rejoice that you are out of its dangers," said Marion, in reply to his complaint, "though so sorrowful for the cause. But consider our anxiety concerning Maurice and my uncle, and your good old grandfather; perhaps you may see cause yet to rejoice that you are here in Edinburgh."

"Marion is right, Edward," said Lady Balmerino. "You may see cause yet to be truly thankful for the dispensations of Providence, which have decreed that during this sharp contest, your maiden sword shall not strike a blow. All you have now to do is to reward us for leaving our homes to be your nurses by keeping your mind at rest and getting well as fast as possible."

And slowly but surely the color came back to the thin and wasted face, brightness to the eye, and elasticity to the step; and on the very day he first left the house for a breath of fresh air on the green slopes beneath the castle walls came the news of the defeat at Culloden.

Then, after several days of agonizing suspense, came the disastrous news of the good old Marshal's death, and of the flight of Maurice; also, that Lord Balmerino had been taken prisoner on the field, and was now on his way by sea to London.

For awhile Edward and his fair companions were stunned by the news they had received, the latter sinking beneath the shock of tidings which they felt convinced would end,

with regard to Lord Balmerino, in bringing him to the block, whilst Edward, his frame enfeebled by a long and severe illness, was but little calculated to preach up the fortitude to others which he strangely lacked himself, for memory would linger upon old days—the days of his happy, reckless childhood—when he, the youngest of the family, and the favorite grandson of the Marshal, not unfrequently won him over to join him in his boyish sports.

At length, brushing away the tears that stood in his eyes, he tried to play the part of comforter, and avowed his intention of escorting them to London immediately.

"It is impossible, Edward," said Lady Balmerino. "Why, it is but a few days since you first left the sick room. Consider how our distress will be increased should you have a relapse and fall ill by the way."

"I am getting very strong and am quite well enough to travel," was the reply.

But his looks belied his words, and remembering that they would accomplish the journey far more quickly than the unfortunate captive, Lord Balmerino, he yielded consent to the wishes of the ladies, and agreed to postpone his journey till three more days had elapsed.

And so it happened that the compulsory stay of young St. John in Edinburgh had not only, though at the cost of a severe illness, saved his life from being forfeit to the law, had he even not fallen on the field, but had been the means of making him the stay of two defenceless women when most they needed protection, and gave him the melancholy pleasure of knowing that it would be in his power to soothe by his presence the last hours of one of the Marshal's oldest and best-loved friends.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE STORY OF A PENITENT.



SEVERAL weeks have passed since the night on which the Sœur Madeleine became a resident at the chateau, and the hopes which Lady Florenee had entertained of a speedy reunion with those she loved had one after another drifted away.

Suspense and deferred hope had pressed heavily on the heart of the invalid. She had heard and had wept over the account of the retreat from Derby, of the cruelties of the military ruffian, General Hawley, of the battle of Falkirk; also, that, excepting a few flesh wounds of little import, the Marshal and Maurice were both well, but that, as the Prince intended at once to attack the English army, it was impossible to return to St. Germains.

The journey was long, the weather unusually bleak and inclement, and unwilling to drag them from the strife in which they were engaged, and resting on the fond delusion that the anticipated battle at Culloden would reinstate on the throne the grandson of the king and queen she had so dearly loved, Lady Florenee kept her sorrow to herself, concealed the gravity of her malady, hoped she should be spared to see them again, and fought bravely with her illness.

"Read the letter to me, Sister, and tell me if my Isabel is coming soon," said Lady Florenee, placing a letter which had just reached her in the hand of the Sister.

"Another disappointment," she had faltered forth when the Sister had perused the few lines the note contained.

Yes, she had looked anxiously for the coming of Isabel, but the hard and pitiless weather still prevailed; it was now March, and as intensely cold as in mid-winter.

"I am better," thus ran the letter, "and long to see you once again, to talk with you about happy days yet to come, but I am forbidden to travel yet lest my illness should return. At the most, however, a few, a very few weeks, and once again, my more than mother, I shall behold you. Providence has indeed interposed wonderfully in my regard. I have now nothing left to wish but the safe and speedy return of Maurice and the Marshal, and your own recovery to health."

And the wind swept in hollow gusts down the hillside, a heavy fall of snow had that morning fallen and was already crisp on the ground, the hoar-frost had gathered on the bare branches of the creeping plants that garlanded the windows, and the leaden hue of the sky betokened that ere long there would be another snow storm.

To Lady Florence, the Sister Madeleine had long been all in all; to see her move across the room, to listen to the low and gentle tones of her voice as she read to her, to clasp her hand, or lay her throbbing head on her bosom, comforted her exceedingly.

And the Sister, long accustomed to sickness and death, knew full well that the end was not far off.

Without the chateau, all around was cheerless and desolate; within, warmth and comfort; the doctor had paid his visit, the priest, in case of danger, had anointed the sick lady with the holy oils, and drawing the curtains over the windows in order to shut out the dreary aspect of the weather, and stirring the wood fire into a cheerful blaze, the Sister sat her down to read or talk, according as her patient wished.

A strong feeling of affection had drawn the hearts of these two together. Since last I told you of the Sister of Charity, it had increased with every remaining day, so that the Lady Florence could not bear her out of her sight.

Very often had she pressed her to talk about her youth, of the *cause* that had led her to seek a convent home. She would merely say, with a soft smile, and mayhap a touch of sadness in her voice the while, “It was my vocation, Madam.”

“True, Sister, but there is oftentimes some cause that arises on a sudden which manifests this vocation, and shows God’s chosen ones it is His will they should be wholly His.”

When she said these words, a bright spot glowed on the Sister’s pale check, but she made no reply. The Lady Florence said no more just then. She saw there was a deep-seated repugnance in the Sister to speak in any way, however trifling, of her early life.

But when sleep rested on her own eyelids, and the Sœur Madeleine was alone with self, then, the better spirit within her, doomed to do mortal combat with that fierce one which strove, ever and anon, to obtain the mastery over her, visited her with self-reproach.

“To-morrow, to-morrow; yes, it shall be done ere another sun shall set, the rising of which she may never behold. It is the fire yet smouldering within my heart, ready to be fanned into a flame, which seals my lips. Have I trod thus far the rugged path, and yet do my sluggish feet falter at the last step? Have I extended my hand with loving haste to touch the thorny crown, and yet hesitate to take it finally within my grasp, lest one thorn of those which pierced my Saviour’s brow should, for a brief period, lacerate my sinful heart? Shall I leave this place with half my work, by far the greater half, undone, for this hesitation shows me *self* is not yet conquered? Ah! no; it *shall* be done before to-morrow’s sun has set.”

A restless movement on the part of the invalid disturbed the Sister’s musings. She rose and moistened her feverish

lips with a cooling draught, shook up her pillow, kissed the throbbing brow, replenished the fire with fresh logs, and advancing to the window, raised the curtain to look out on the dreary scene without,

Cold and cheerless, a white waste of country as far as the eye could reach. Looming darkly in the distance stands the Palace, on the summit of the hill which skirted the fields, till it terminated in the valley beneath.

The usually impassible and beautiful face wears a sad smile as she gazes out into the desolate night, and as she lets the curtain fall into its place she says to herself :

“ It is well for me, my God, that Thou hast led me here, or I had lacked the strength to keep my hand at the plough without looking back again.”

The Sœur Madeleine was well used to hours of watching. Her life was a hard one, as all know who are acquainted with the duties, and who is not, of a Sister of Charity ?

Physically, she was not unfitted for the work to which she had devoted herself in a spirit of penance. Thus, when the grey dawn of the bleak, March morning streamed into the room, it found her little couch unpressed, and herself seated by the fire, calmly reading the life of the holy man who founded the admirable institute to which she belonged.

The earlier portion of the night had been spent in rigid commune with self, in long and earnest prayer and penitential tears. The morning found her composed and cheerful, her beautiful countenance radiant with a joy like unto that of Magdalen of old, when she knelt at the Master’s feet and bathed them with her tears.

“ And how do you find yourself this morning, dearest Madam,” said the Sister, on the awaking of the invalid. “ Your night’s rest has been almost unbroken, and you seem free from pain.”

"Better, yes, better, my dear Sister Madeleine. I feel altogether refreshed."

"I rejoice to hear it. You shall have your chocolate, and then when your morning devotions are over, as we shall spend an hour or two quietly together without interruption, I will"—

"Ah, I know what you are going to say. You will read to me. How much I thank you for cheering my long hours of sickness. You read so well; your voice so low and soft, that, like the gentle breeze of a summer day, it lulls me to a delicious sense of rest and quiet."

"No, I am not going to read to you this morning. I will tell you a story instead."

"I thank you, dear Sister. And what shall the story be about?" said the aged lady, much in the tone of a child when full of eager expectation.

"It shall be the story of a Penitent."

"The story of a Penitent! Well, I shall prepare for something very interesting, I assure you. You are going to tell me the history of some great personage, I expect?"

"Oh, no. It shall be the history of a person far from great; only of an obscure individual, whose heart had been the abiding place of many evil passions, but who at last, like Magdalen of old, was drawn by love and repentance to the feet of the Crucified."

"Ah, I see; you have a devotion to that saint yourself, for *you* are Sœur Madeleine. Well, here is Annette with my chocolate, then I will say my morning prayers, and afterwards I will listen to the story."

Whilst Lady Florence sipped her chocolate, the Sister partook of her own simple breakfast; then the lady performed her morning devotions, after which her eager—

"Now, Sister, I am quite ready, if you are ready also," brought the latter to her side.

She had put *self* quite away, you know ; that was the compact she had made with her God during the long and silent hours of her watch last night. So she drew a chair to the bedside, and placed it so that her pale, lovely face was not at all in the shade ; the inmost workings of her mind were about to be laid bare, and why hide the countenance lest its expression should betray the emotion of her heart, when her own lips were about to make all manifest to her auditor ?

" I am about to tell you, dear Madam," began she, " a tale of pride and passion, of baffled hope, of jealousy and hatred. I shall try and be very brief. She of whom I am about to speak was caressed and loved by those around her ; she was very beautiful in form and feature, and vain, too, of her charms ; and as she merged from youth to womanhood, she conceived the idea that *all* with whom she came in contact must bow down and give way before *her* ; that her face alone must win her the possession of rank, wealth, and position ; her ambition was equal to her pride ; and to gain these perishable advantages, she trod beneath her feet every obstacle that presented itself ; and guided by the evil spirit by which she was possessed, she scrupled at nothing ; she set at naught the most intimate and dearest ties ; she was prepared to sacrifice and destroy, if they militated against what she considered her own well-being, everything that offered opposition to her will.

" She was one of those unhappy ones who appear as if they were sent upon earth as a warning to others ; her passions were unbridled, unrestrained by reason or guided by religion ; consequently, they knew no medium either in love or hatred ; she loved, indeed, with all the ardor of her fiery, impetuous nature, and she hated fiercely ; her pride was indomitable, and was the master passion that ruled her entire life.

"At last, out of His great mercy, God saw fit to stop this woman's career of wickedness by an awful calamity, of which her own base pride was the cause. For some time it still prevailed, though mingled with remorse; therefore, she shrank away and dwelt alone; she would not see those whose hearts yet turned towards her; she would not brook their presence, feeling it a silent reproach to herself."

Here the Sister for a moment paused, for the Lady Florence had started as the Sister had uttered the last words; but she made no comment; therefore she continued:

"But one who was an angel of goodness would not allow her to rest in the solitude she had chosen; she sought her out, came unbidden to her home, careless of her haughty, insolent demeanor, striving to work on the barren soil of that proud woman's heart.

"At first she was rudely repulsed; the servants were ordered to deny her. Poor, humble-minded soul! she heeded not the insult, but watched and waited till she met her in the road near her dwelling.

"I pray you let me see you. Do not deny my request," said she, following the quickened steps of this erring sister.

"Nay, have I not told you I will see no one? I will not have my solitude disturbed," and with haughty gesture she motioned her away.

"Day after day, however, she repeated her visit, till after a time she was expected, borne with, endured, rather than welcomed, as one bears quietly with something disagreeable which we cannot lay aside.

"At last, this woman, in God's own good time, came to be a sort of necessity to her erring sister; she grew in fact to like her somewhat, though the proud, unregenerate heart still rebelled at its association with this humble, simple soul. But the end was not as yet.

"In course of time she was visited by sickness long and grievous. Ah! it is the ordeal through which many have been purified. She was brought, as it were, to the very gates of death, and was carefully nursed and tended by this patient, faithful woman.

"On one night, when her disorder was at its crisis, she lay to all *outward* appearance for many hours unconscious; she heard those around her bed declare that in a very few hours she must cease to live.

"So reduced was she, her state so like unto that of death, that she could not lift a finger or make a sign, but the whole of her life lay mapped out before her; not a guilty word, or thought, or action, escaped her remembrance.

"In that awful moment, with the soul trembling, as it were, on the brink of eternity, and seeming already about to appear before the judgment-seat of God, she made a vow in her heart that if time might yet be given her to make atonement for the errors of a still young but misspent life, she would dedicate the rest of her days to God in the service of the poor and suffering.

"Suddenly, as by a miracle, a new life was infused into her exhausted frame; from that moment she steadily recovered, to the astonishment of her medical attendant, and of all who had beheld the state to which she had been reduced.

"After many weeks, she rose from her couch, the shadow indeed of her former self, for she was still pale, emaciated, feeble.

"But I spoke rightly when I said a new life had been given to this woman. It was so in many ways. The pleasures she had loved, the admiration she had courted, she no longer sighed for. She only awaited the perfect recovery of her health to give herself with her whole heart to God.

"She had learned to love the woman who had sought her

so earnestly, and felt no small pain at breaking out the truth that henceforth in another land she must live and die. Not of the Catholic faith, this simple-minded woman could not see *why* she, for whom she had prayed and wept, and who at last had learned abundantly to return her love, could not rest content where she then was, leading as she did a quiet and retired life. But her decision had been made on the night whereon she had stood on the verge of eternity. She was now not her own, but her Maker's, happy in the thought that He, in His boundless mercy, had suffered her to live and make atonement for the past; her renewed health and strength she regarded as the compact ratified between herself and God. She had caused, by the wilfulness of her pride, even the death of one who would have loved her, and with a heart wounded through and through by repentance, and softened by love, she seeks to make reparation for the past under the garb of a Sister of Charity, and"—

"Ah, Sister, Sister, it is of Margaret you are telling me. Nay, nay, can my suspicions be correct? Ah, my God, am I so happy?"

Encircling Lady Florence with her arms, the Sister tenderly embraced her, whilst her tears fell in torrents down her face.

Then the lady put her gently aside, gazed fixedly upon her face, and said:

"Ah, yes, it *is* the same countenance, but altered too because of the lapse of ten long years. And why should I hesitate to say the truth because Margaret and the Sœur Madeleine are, and yet are *not*, the same? I could reproach you, too, that you have kept me in ignorance so long as to who you were. My own lips, my Margaret, should never have revived the painful past, nor should you have spoken as you have done but now."

"Dearest Lady Florenee, *never* call me Margaret again; let me ever be to you the Sœur Madeleine; the name of Margaret alone brings back sad memories; and now," added the Sister, kneeling by the bedside, and taking the lady's hand within her own, "I would say a few words more, and then for *ever* the past must be as a sealed book between us.

"She of whom I have been telling you was my gentle aunt, Janet Graham. When I bade her adieu, I traveled straight to France, and at once sought and obtained admission into a convent of Sisters of Charity, resolving at some future time to make myself known to you, for reasons which must be obvious to you. However, my intentions have been frustrated, and I need not hesitate to say to *you*, to whom all the past is known, that I could not have entered the chateau had he who was the object of my misplaced attachment been here. Moreover, I felt that I must leave you soon after my first arrival, till the illness of poor Isabel and the continued stay of your grandson in Scotland made me feel that I might with perfect safety remain.

"You have often asked me to speak to you of my early life. Alas! from the very thought of doing so I shrank with horror; and yet the determination which I made when I again entered the chateau was not carried out whilst my lips remained sealed as to the past. I had not conquered *self* till I had made known to you who I was, and removed the veil which had screened me from you all these long years. Now I have told you all. I wish to be again in your eyes only the Sœur Madeleine."

"As one who was lost and is found, more precious and dear to me in your new life, my child, than the Isabel who, by her very nature free from violent passions, never went astray. How good is God to send you to me, my love!" added Lady Florence, gazing fondly on the upturned, beau-

tiful face, now glowing with a supreme happiness not born of earth. "I mourned for the presence of one who loved me, dearest, unconscious who was by my side. I wept for you, prayed for you, grieved for you, and God has sent you to me—you, even one of his cherished ones. Ah, my child, my Margaret—once more let me call you by the old name—no happiness can surpass that which now I feel."

Leave we Lady Florence and the Soeur Madeleine, for words of mine cannot express the joy of the former, nor the holy and calm repose which reigned in the heart of the Sister. We are told that *angels rejoice over the return of the sinner more than over the ninety-nine just that need not repentance.*

Verily, the angels themselves might almost have envied a happiness too great for earth.



CHAPTER IX.

THE VETERAN MARSHAL—SANS PEUR ET SANS REPROCHE.

There was no lack of bravery there,
 No spare of blood or breath,
 For *one* to *two* our foes we dar'd,
 For freedom or for death.

[*Jacobite Song.*]



CONSIDER the coming strife by far the most critical in which your Highness has yet been engaged," said the Marshal St. John to Charles Edward the day previous to their march for Culloden Moor. "I agree with Lord George Murray, and advise a night march, take the English soldiers unawares, and attack their camp in the dead of night."

Bearing in mind the unequal struggle in which he was about to engage, the disparity in point of numbers—for the troops in command of the Duke of Cumberland nearly doubled the soldiers of the Prince—also, that the latter had a fleet moving along the coast laden with provisions and other necessary articles, the Prince eagerly listened to the proposal, and it was decided that they should be on the march so as to reach the enemy's camp by two in the morning.

But, alas! during the whole of that day, one small loaf of the coarsest description was all that could be doled out to the unfortunate Highlanders. Its ingredients (for the remains of one of these loaves, or *bannocks*, have been handed down to posterity by the care of a Jacobite family) seem to have been formed of the husks of oats and a coarse kind of dust such as is found on the floors of a mill.

As night drew on, the almost famished men not unfrequently straggled out of the ranks in search of food, and

their only reply to the expostulations of their officers was, that they might shoot them if they pleased, for they would sooner die than starve any longer. Many of those who remained, overcome by hunger and their fatigue, declared they were unable to proceed, and throwing themselves beneath the trees, fell sound asleep.

Thus, they were still some four miles from the English army, when the roll of drums burst upon the ears of their astonished commanders, and they hastened to retreat until they could reassemble their scattered forces.

At a still early hour they were again on Culloden Moor, and were joined by Maedonald of Keppoch, and the Frasers. Charles Edward himself, completely overcome by his night's march, had laid down to rest after partaking of a slight refreshment of bread and whiskey, when Maurice aroused him with the startling information that the English cavalry were within two miles of them.

Immediately all was confusion. The sound of the cannon gathered together the still sleeping Highlanders, the drums were beat, and the pipes began to play the gatherings of their respective clans, but, alas! the majority of both officers and men were scattered in all directions.

And now the battle began by the artillery of the two armies pointing their fire at each other. That of the Prince availed but little, whilst the fire of the English army carried desolation and horror into the ranks of the insurgents, Charles himself narrowly escaping; he was bespattered with mud thrown up by the balls, his horse was wounded, and one of his attendants fell dead by his side.

This 27th of April, 1746, was a sadly unpropitious morning even in point of weather, for a strong northeast wind, accompanied by a blinding shower of sleet and snow, blew the smoke of the artillery in the faces of the mountaineers,

and led on by the brave Lord Murray, sword in hand, the Camerons and Stewarts of Appin, rendered furious by the galling fire, and heedless of the smoke and hail which swept full in their faces, rush against the enemy, and immediately raising one loud shout, the rest of the clans brandishing their broadswords, dashed impetuously against the fixed bayonets of their opponents.

Making themselves masters of two pieces of cannon, they still dashed madly forwards, breaking through the first line and coming in contact with the second, which the Duke had strengthened, fearing the onset of the clans.

A compact mass of armed men were they, drawn up three deep, the front rank on their knees, the second bending forward, the third standing upright, carrying death before them by means of their destructive fire.

Then all were mingled in the wildest confusion, with but scant distinction of regiment or of clan. What course before them but to retreat? though here and there indeed, reckless of their lives, a few of them dashed madly forwards, not one of whom returned to tell the tale of his defeat.

The wild valor of the mountaineers on that dreadful day was indeed no match for the steady determination of the English forces. The tide of the battle might still have won the day for Charles had the clan Maedonald done their duty. Placed on the left instead of the post of honor, "the right," the men fired their muskets instead of making an onset to the charging cry of "Claymore," vainly shouted by the Duke of Perth.

"It rests with you to make the left wing the right," he exclaimed. "Onward to the fight! and proud shall I be to bear your name hereafter."

In vain, too, did the gallant Alexander, chieftain of Keppeoh, shout to them to follow him; exclaiming, in the agony

of the moment, “My God! have the very children of my tribe forsaken me?” as, with a drawn sword in one hand and a pistol in the other, he, too, rushed onwards to the fight.

Then ensued a scene of the wildest confusion. Clans and regiments still mingled together; and, in the midst of a destructive fire, a veteran officer, dearly loved and honored by Charles Edward, bare-headed, his white locks streaming in the wind, and with sword in hand, stood side by side with the valiant Keppoch. Onward, still onward, the brave veteran forces his way, long after Keppoch had been brought to the ground by a musket shot, until he found himself driven by the fury of the fight towards a few straggling bushes that skirted the moor. Then there was a crashing of the withered, stunted shrubs, a plashing of blood over the snowdrift which covered them, and, with uplifted arms, the Marshal veteran of Limerick craved “God’s mercy on his soul;” then, he feebly murmured, “Maurice, my boy, take care of yourself—think not of me,” and fell senseless on the ground.

He had received a severe blow on the head from a sword, accompanied by the words from the lips of the miscreant Hawley:

“Traitor, at last, then, you have paid the penalty of your treason to your lawful King.”

Reckless of their own safety, Colonel St. John, aided by the faithful Dugald, who had been filled with surprise on witnessing the intrepid conduct of the Marshal, rushed forward and succeeded in bearing his inanimate form from the field of slaughter. For it deserved not to be called a field of battle; and the confusion of the Highland clans, whose retreat must else have been converted into a disastrous rout, was averted by the French and Irish piquets who covered them by a close and continuous fire.

In the most intense agony, the Prince had witnessed, from the eminence on which he stood, his aged friend, the veteran St. John, severely wounded ; and now, with large tears pouring down his face, he was doomed to behold the flight of his friends and followers and the destruction of his dearest hopes. At last, his tutor, Sir Thomas Sheridan, who had accompanied him from France, prevailed on him to seek safety in flight with the remainder of his forces, part of whom had left the field with something like order, their pipes playing and colors flying.

Leaving his unfortunate grandfather in the care of Dugald, Maurice had sought the Prince, and, as soon as he had seen unhappy Charles hurried from the fatal field, he returned to the spot in which he had left the Marshal, strapped him to his own horse, and galloped off in order to make the best of his way to a place of shelter.

The unfortunate men who took the road to Inverness, in consequence of having to cross the moor, were speedily overtaken, and the five miles between that place and the field of carnage presented a terrible scene of slaughter, corpses and blood.*

The brutal Duke of Cumberland suffered the wounded men to remain on the field of battle, stripped of their clothes, from Wednesday until three o'clock on the afternoon of Friday, when he sent detachments to kill all who were still alive. The strength of a large number of these unfortunates had resisted the effects of the constant falls of rain,

* By this time, says the writer of a contemporary letter, our horse and dragoons had closed on them from both wings, and then began a general carnage. The moor was covered with blood, and our men, what with killing the enemy, dabbling their feet in the blood and splashing it about one another, looked like so many butchers.—*Scott's Magazine*.

Not contented with the blood shed in the heat of action, they traversed the field after the battle, and massacred those miserable wretches who lay maimed and expiring, some of the officers themselves assisting.—*Smollett's History of England*. Vol. 3, p. 229.

and the feroeious and vindictive Duke not only passed through this terrible field of blood with his staff of officers, but took a part in the tragedy. Fair complexioned as to countenance and bloated in form, he rode calmly amongst the ranks of the dying and the dead, and perceiving a young man, by name Charles Traver, who had held a commission as Lieutenant-Colonel, lying wounded on the ground, but who raised himself as he approached, he inquired of him to whom he belonged.*

"To the Prince," replied he.

"Shoot that insolent scoundrel! Major Wolfe," said the butcher Duke, to an officer who was standing by.

"My commission is at the disposal of your Royal Highness, but I cannot consent to become an executioner," said the Major.

His commands were also ineffectual with two other officers whom he requested to shoot the unfortunate Highlander, but, perceiving a common soldier, he asked him if his piece was loaded, and the man replying in the affirmative, his command that he should shoot the young officer was at once put into execution.

How widely different was the conduct of the inhuman Cumberland and the English after the battle of Culloden, to the humanity and consideration of Charles Edward and his gallant followers towards their wounded enemies, when they were victors at Preston Pans and Falkirk.

Havoc and desolation were alike carried into the castle of the chieftain and the hut of the peasant. For penetrating through the Highlands, the Duke and his diabolical Commander-in-chief, General Hawley, advanced to Fort Augustus, laid waste the country with fire and sword, and women and children, whose husbands and brothers had been mur-

* Jesse's Memoirs of the Pretenders, &c.

dered, and whose houses had been burned to the ground, were turned out *naked* upon the barren heath to starve, and were seen shivering in the clefts of the rocks dying of cold and hunger.

Amongst the first acts of severity of the Duke of Cumberland was to hang up thirty-six deserters from the royal army. Nineteen wounded officers belonging to the Highland army were also dragged out of a wood in which they had taken refuge, the greater number shot, and the remainder who showed any signs of life had their brains knocked out by the brutal soldiery, whilst a hut containing a number of wounded Highlanders was set fire to, and not only was everyone bayoneted who attempted to escape, but when the building was burnt to the ground the remains of thirty men were found blackened by the flames.*

* "Human nature," says Mr. Jesse, "revolts at such sickening details. The condition of the prisoners who were at sea was even worse than at land. They were thrust, half naked, into the holds of the different vessels, where they slept on the stones which formed the ballast; their sole allowance of drink a bottle of cold water, their daily food ten ounces of an inferior sort of meal. Several of them were put into one of the Scotch kirks, stripped naked, and left to die of their wounds; and though one of the prisoners was a surgeon, his instruments were taken from him to prevent him from dressing the wounds of his companions."

"Several of these men were put on board the Jane, at Leith, and left to die in lingering tortures; others were sent out to work as slaves in the Barbadoes.

"These merciless inhumanities were independent of the legal executions; the details of the demoniac barbarities of the Duke of Cumberland and his followers would appear too dreadful to be credible were they not fully substantiated on the most undoubted authority.
—Jesse's *Memoirs of the Pretenders and their Adherents*.



CHAPTER X.

THE FUGITIVE PRINCE.

CHEN the chances of the day were observed by the faithful adherents of the Prince to go so fatally against his cause, the French and Irish troops had vigorously exerted themselves in helping him make good his retreat to the western coast, with the hope that he might there find a French vessel which might convey him to France.

It was afterwards decided that the greater majority of the party should separate, in order the more perfectly to ensure safety.

The anguish which was felt by Maurice St. John when he witnessed the death of the Marshal may be better conceived than described. He was soothed, however, by the reflection that the venerated remains of one so honored and beloved had not been left exposed to outrage on that field of carnage, but had received interment at the hands of Dugald and himself. But the dread that the tale he had to tell might possibly end the days of Lady Florence filled his heart with sorrow, whilst his mind was also distressed as to the fate of his brother Edward, whom severe illness had prevented from taking up arms in the fatal field of Culloden.

Thirty thousand pounds was the amount offered for the capture of Charles Edward. An enormous sum was this wherewith to tempt the poor Highlanders, amongst whom his lot was for a time cast. The English cavalry were on his track, the troops of the Duke were scouring the Highlands, and ships of war were cruising along the coast to intercept any vessel which might carry him away.

Nursed amidst the luxuries which wealth bestows, and

reared in the soft air of an Italian climate, it was a wonderful and strange thing that Charles Edward could brave and endure the unexampled privations which it was his lot to undergo when fleeing from rock to rock, from island to island, to escape from his persecutors; very often in danger of being drowned, exposed to the fury of the elements, sheltered for a while in a poor hut in Benbecala, the door of which was so low that, as the Prince was tall of stature, they had to dig below it before he could enter.

* * * * *

“ Yes, that will do. I quite admire the disguise, for it is perfect; and now I have put the last touch, I am convinced it will defy detection.”

She who spoke those words was a lovely Scottish maiden of not more than eighteen years of age. Small of stature was she, but her form full of grace and symmetry, her black eyes sparkled with intelligence, and her features, without being strictly regular, were nevertheless handsome; a profusion of chesnut ringlets clustered over her neck and shoulders, and her countenance beamed with an expression of innocent pleasure at the success of her handieract. The person whom she addressed was to outward appearance a servant maid, awkward and ungainly enough in that strange attire; for before the maiden stands the unfortunate heir to three kingdoms, arrayed in a flowered cotton gown, a quilted petticoat, white apron and a cloak of dun camlet, made after the Irish fashion with a hood, which the damsels had just disposed to her satisfaction.

This maiden was the brave and energetic heroine renowned for having aided the Prince in his escape from his enemies, and known to posterity as the celebrated Flora Maedonald. With one attendant whom Charles had attached to his ser-

vice, she had embarked with him in a boat on the way to Skye.

The journey was not without its perils, from which, however, the little party escaped, and safely arrived at the Kilbride in the Isle of Skye. She warned the Prince that she must leave him alone on the beach whilst she went to the house of her kinswoman, the Lady Margaret Macdonald, to apprise her of his safe arrival.

Attended then by Neil Mackeekan, she proceeded to the house of this lady, and, entering the apartment in which she was seated, discovered, to her intense alarm, that Lady Margaret was not alone; and her heart beat more wildly than was its wont when she discovered that the Lady's guest was Lieutenant Macleod, whose militia was in the neighborhood, and who had three of his men in the house at that very time.

With the tact of a clever woman, however, Flora mastered her agitation, spoke of indifferent subjects, then answered with composure the questions he put to her, and contrived to play her part while the dinner was being served, though her little heart beat wildly enough, without exciting the suspicions of the inquisitive officer. Another visitor, too, was present, of a very different stamp; a generous, warm-hearted old Jacobite, as enthusiastic in the cause of Charles Edward as was Flora herself, and this was Alexander Macdonald of Kingsburgh.

Flora felt that it was impossible to withdraw Lady Macdonald from the room without exciting suspicion, so she had recourse to *by-play*, and, affecting admiration for some paintings in the room, she lured the old gentleman to her side, and put him in possession of her secret.

"Is it possible! here, in Skye, and the militia in the place?"

"It is; watch an opportunity and let Lady Margaret

know of his perilous position." Then, raising her voice, she again expressed her admiration of the landscape scene before her, and approaching Macleod, asking him if he was a connoisseur in works of art, she managed to break off his conversation with Lady Macdonald, and drew him to the further end of the apartment. The field was now clear, and obedient to a sign from Kingsburgh, the Lady, in wondering amazement, followed him from the room.

"I shall surprise you, Madam, by what I am going to say. Miss Flora has just informed me that the Prince, God bless him, is now on the beach."

A loud scream from Lady Macdonald followed Kingsburgh's announcement.

"Let me implore of you to be calm, Madam."

"We shall all be ruined! I and my family will be ruined for ever."

"Not so, Madam. I am an old man, and quite willing to take the poor, hunted down Prince to the shelter of my own home. I have but one life to lose, and it matters but little whether I die with a halter round my neck, or whether I await a natural death which, in the course of nature, cannot be long distant. There is one thing, however, in which your Ladyship's help will be of use."

"In what way, Kingsburgh?"

"Send immediately for Donald Roy, who was wounded at Culloden. He is at present on this very spot; let him be in readiness to take the Prince to Portree, and from thence to Macleod of Raasay, who is devoted to his interests; meanwhile, I will myself go in search of him."

Time flew on leaden wings to Flora when alone with her dangerous companion. The company of a young and fascinating girl doubtless had its charms even with the officer of the militia, but *thirty thousand pounds* was a stake at issue,

which made him and others who were on the lookout exceedingly keen. The slightest noise made her tremble, and yet withal she had to keep up a running fire of small talk to beguile the time and conceal her agitation.

At length she found she could take her departure without exciting suspicion, and Lady Macdonald, taking the cue when she approached to bid her farewell, affected to be extremely loth to part with her.

"When last you were here, my dear Flora," said she, "you promised that the next time you came you would pay me a long visit."

"To-day it is impossible, dear Lady Margaret. You must hold me excused, for I much wish to see my mother and be secure in my own home in these troubled times."

"Well, understand, now, I shall positively lay an embargo on you the next time you come to Mugstat, and I shall compel you to pay me a longer visit."

Then, kissing her hostess and extending her hand to the officer, she departed, attended by a maid and Neil Mackean, all three being on horseback.

They had not been long on the road before they overtook the Prince and Kingsburgh, whom they passed at a brisk trot, Flora urging them to increased speed in hopes that Charles might escape observation.

His awkward appearance and masculine gait, however, attracted her maid's notice.

"I think," said she, "I never saw so impudent a woman in my life as the wench Kingsburgh is walking with. She's like a man dressed up in woman's clothes. See what long strides the jade takes and how awkwardly she manages her petticoats."

Small wonder the Prince attracted the maid's notice; his strides were unnaturally long, and when fording a small

brook which ran across the road, he held up his woman's garb so awkwardly as to bring upon him Kingsburgh's remonstrances. Charles promised to walk with more care for the future, but in crossing the next brook he fell into the other extreme, and suffered his dress to float in the water.

Kingsburgh's fears were then so thoroughly aroused that, striking out of the highroad, he took the Princeo across the hills to his house, which he did not reach till eleven o'clock, wet to the skin with a drenching rain, and preceded by Flora and her companions.

Leading Charles into a spacious hall, Kingsburgh desired a servant to tell her Mistress that some friends had accompanied him home, and that she must come down and receive them; but the lady was already in bed and sent an apology begging that they would make themselves welcome to all that was in the house.

No sooner had the servant left the room, than in rushed her little girl, exclaiming :

" Oh, Mamma, Papa has brought home the most odd, muckle, ill-shaken wife I have ever seen, and he's taken her into the hall, too ! "

A few minutes later, and Kingsburgh himself entered the room, urging her to be quick and dress as speedily as possible. His hasty and mysterious manner led her at once to suspect that he had brought home with him some person of rank and distinction involved in the late troubles, and she hastened to complete her toilet, sending her little girl for her keys of which she was in want, but the child soon returned, exclaiming :

" I cannot fetch them, Mamma ; the 'muckle woman' is walking up and down the hall, and I'm afraid of her."

Full of curiosity, the lady at once hastened to the hall

herself. When she entered, the Prince was seated at the further end, and rising, he advanced to meet her, taking her by the hand and kissing her on the cheek.

You may be sure she was both alarmed and surprised when she felt her cheek rubbed by the rough beard of a man.

Not one word did either of them speak, but the lady felt sure her suspicions were correct, and hastening to her husband, she said :

"I am positively certain, Kingsburgh, that that pretended female is no woman at all, but some unfortunate gentleman who has escaped from Culloden ; has he brought any news of the Prince ?"

"My dear wife," said Kingsburgh, taking her hands within his own, "it is the Prince *himself*."

"We are all ruined ! we shall all be hanged !" was the reply.

"Never mind, wife, we can die but once, and if we die for *this*, then we die in a good cause, for we are performing an act of charity and humanity. Now go and get ready, as soon as possible, eggs, butter, cheese and whatever else you have in the house."

"Eggs, butter and cheese !" reiterated the lady, with a slight laugh ; "a fine supper for a Prince, truly."

"Our supper, wife, will be a feast to *him*. You do not know how hard he has fared of late ; besides, if we could make a grand meal of it, we dare not ; the suspicions of the servants would at once be roused. Make haste with what you have got, and come to supper yourself."

"Me come to supper !" she exclaimed, "I ken naething how to behave before Majesty."

"You will have to come, wife," was Kingsburgh's reply. "The Prince would not eat a bit without you, and he is so

affable and easy, that you will find it quite a pleasant matter to be in his company."

With Flora on his right hand and Lady Kingsburgh on his left sat Charles at supper. He made an excellent meal, four eggs, some collops, and bread and butter being rapidly dispatched, together with two bottles of ale.

When the supper was finished, he pulled out of his pocket a small pipe worn to a mere stump, and as black as ink. "I have been a great sufferer from toothache," said he, "and I find relief from the use of tobacco."

Then the ladies withdrew, but the small hours of the night had set in before Charles Edward and his worthy host prepared for rest. Conversation on the troubled past and the uncertain future beguiled the time; he had smoked to his heart's content and the punch bowl had been many times replenished.

The unfortunate Prince had for so long a time been deprived of the comfort of a bed, that his sleep was prolonged for no less than ten hours, and when he at length arose, it was decided that he should quit the house in the same costume in which he had entered, in order not to awaken suspicion on the part of the servants.

As soon as he had finished dressing, Lady Kingsburgh and Flora were summoned to put on his cap and apron and arrange his hood, he laughing heartily the while, as if he had been intent merely on a frolic.

"Oh, Miss," said he, "you have forgotten my apron; pray give me one, it is the principal part of my dress."

"Ask him for a lock of his hair, Flora," said Lady Kingsburgh, in Gaelic.

"Oh, Lady Kingsburgh, I could not think of such a thing!"

"You are talking in Gaelic, ladies, what is it you are speaking of?"

"Lady Kingsburgh has requested me to ask for a lock of your Highness' hair," replied Flora.

"And you are quite welcome to cut off as much as you please," said Charles, as he laid his head on the lap of his fair preserver.

Flora severed a lock from his head and presented half of it to her friend, keeping the rest for herself.

Before he left the house, his host made him the very welcome present of a pair of shoes, and tying together the wretched old shoes the Prince had taken off, Kingsburgh hung them carefully on a peg, observing that they might be very useful to him on some future day.*

"In what way? I should be glad to know," inquired the Prince.

"I will tell you. When you are fairly settled at St. James', I shall come and see you, introducing myself by shaking these old shoes at you, to remind you of the night you were sheltered and entertained under my roof."

With the graceful ease for which he was so remarkable, Charles thanked Lady Kingsburgh for her kindness, and, accepting a small snuff-box "as a keepsake," he proceeded with his host to Portree, whence he expected to find a boat to carry him to Raasay.

As soon as he had gone, Lady Kingsburgh went to his bedroom, and taking the sheets from the bed, protested they should never again be used or washed, but that they should be laid aside for his own winding sheet.

As soon as Kingsburgh and the Prince had got some distance from the house, Charles withdrew into a thicket and exchanged his female attire for a Highland dress, and then

* "The old shoes of the unfortunate Prince were preserved," says Mr. Jesse, "with religious care by Kingsburgh as long as he lived, and after his death were cut to pieces, and given by his family to their Jacobite friends on various occasions."

prepared to part with his generous preserver, the boat which had been procured with much difficulty being in waiting.

Bidding Flora an affectionate farewell, he kissed her, saying :

"For all that has happened, Madam, I hope we shall yet meet at St. James'."

Alas! reader, a very few days later, the noble and heroic girl was placed in custody and sent to London to be treated as the Government should deem proper; for it had speedily transpired that she had accompanied Charles in his wanderings.

As to poor Kingsburgh, he, too, was arrested and sent to Fort Augustus, thrown in a dungeon and loaded with irons, and whilst being examined was reminded of the "fine opportunity he had lost of making his own fortune, and that of his family, for ever."

"Had I silver and gold," replied the noble old man, "piled heap upon heap to the bulk of yonder mountains, it would not afford me half the pleasure I feel from doing what I have done."

"Should you know the Pretender's head if you saw it?" was the brutal rejoinder.

"I should know the head very well if it were on the shoulders."

"But what if the head be not on the shoulders, do you think you should know it in that case?"

"In that case I will not pretend to know anything about it."

Poor Kingsburgh was kept in close confinement till released by the act of grace a year later.

Hoping to find a French vessel on the lookout, Charles stayed but two days in Raasay. Moreover, he judged it wise never to prolong his stay in one place, for even this

secluded island in the Atlantic had felt the fury of the Duke's soldiers, almost every cottage having been burnt to the ground. At the sight of the ruins he was sensibly affected.

"This is a hard and bitter life," said he to his host, young Raasay, and his cousin Macleod; "but I would rather live ten years in this way, than be taken by my enemies; but I am surprised myself that I am able to bear such constant hardships and fatigue. Since the battle of Culloden I have endured more than sufficient to kill a hundred men. Surely, Providence does not design this for nothing; I am certainly reserved for some good end."

"And what does your Highness think your enemies would do with you if you fell into their hands?" asked Macleod.

"I think they would not dare to take my life publicly, but I *do* dread being privately destroyed by poison or assassination."

Fifteen miles further on, after a perilous voyage, the fugitive Prince effected a landing and passed the night in a wretched cow-house, and the next morning he proceeded on his way, accompanied by Norman Macleod; and proposing that the latter should act the master and he the man, he divested himself of his tartan waistcoat, which he made Maleolm put on, wearing in exchange his companion's shirt. He then took off his periwig, put it in his pocket, and tied a dirty white napkin under his chin; the buckles he stripped from his shoes, the ruffles from his shirt, and taking a small bundle in his hand, he personated a servant, walking at a respectful distance behind his master.

Long and weary was the journey, but early on the following morning they arrived at the country of the Mackinnons, and the first two persons whom they met the Prince knew as having been involved in the insurrection; and in spite of

the disguise of Charles, they, too, recognized his well remembered features, and burst into a flood of tears.

"Your display of the grief you feel may prove fatal to the Prince," exclaimed Malcolm; "for God's sake, restrain it."

No description could by any possibility exaggerate the wretched appearance and condition of Charles Edward at this time, and well might those poor Highlanders have been so affected. It is a fact, for I do not draw upon fiction as to these details of the unfortunate grandson of James the Second, that he was reduced to the very lowest ebb of misery and distress, and that he bore up with almost unparalleled cheerfulness under the wretchedness that it was so frequently his hard lot to endure.

"I wish you would at once take me to the home of your own brother-in-law, Malcolm," observed Charles, after having parted with the Highlanders.

"I shall introduce your Royal Highness, then, as the son of a surgeon residing at Crieff, who is supposed to be hiding somewhere about Skye;" and Charles Edward gladly giving assent, a short walk brought them thither.

It was not long before an excellent Highland breakfast was set before them, Charles continuing to act the part of servant to Macleod; and when their meal was ended they thankfully laid down to snatch a few hours rest, whilst Macleod's sister, who was mistress of the house, kept watch at the top of a hill hard by. They were soon fast asleep, but the Prince was the first to wake, and when Malcolm arose he was much amused to see him dandling the baby to whom he was singing.

Macleod expressed his surprise, and Charles for a moment forgot he was personating a servant.

"Who knows," said he, "this little fellow may become a captain in my service yet."

Quickly, however, was he reminded of his want of caution, for looking at him with an expression of supreme contempt on her hard and withered features, an old woman who was standing by, exclaimed:

"Hout, nae ; it is muckle mair likely hersell may be an auld serjeant in the bairn's company."



CHAPTER XI.

A ROYAL WANDERER.

SPENDING but one day in the hospitable home of John Mackinnon, Charles Edward, after many hardships and narrow escapes, arrived at Borrodaile, the residence of Augus Macdonald having been conveyed thither by Mackinnon himself, after he had taken leave of his friend Macleod.

On approaching the wretched hut in which Augus was then residing, Charles was seized with an unutterable aversion to enter. At every step, indeed, in this dreadful wandering through the Highlands, his heart was wrung with sorrow by beholding the misery into which all those were plunged who were loyal to his race. In no instance, however, had he felt so acutely as in the present. The former comfortable and happy home of the brave Highlander had been burnt to the ground, and he had also lost a son at the fatal field of Culloden.*

The Prince paused as he entered the hut, his eyes overflowed with tears, and then advancing to Mrs. Maedonald, who had come forward to meet him, he exclaimed :

“ Is it possible, Madam, you can endure the sight of one who has caused so much misery to yourself and your family ? ”

“ Yes,” and a mournful smile lighted up her face as the poor lady spoke, “ eyen had I lost *all* my sons in your Royal Highness’ service.”

* On his way home, Mackinnon was seized by two of the militia, and at once taken before a certain Captain Ferguson, whose name is still held in abhorrence. He was sharply questioned, and subjected to the most rigorous examination; and when it was found that no information could be elicited from him concerning the Prince, Ferguson commanded him to be stripped and tied to a tree, where he was lashed till the blood gushed from both his sides. He was then in company with the old chief, sent to London, and kept in prison till the July of the following year.

Carefully, then, did this noble woman and her husband supply his wants, whilst the poor wanderer lingered yet a few days in a hut hard by, and then a little while in another, until one morning Augus received news from Glenaladale, one of the Prince's friends, that he had prepared at Morac a more secure asylum for the hunted-down royal wanderer.

The enemies of the unhappy Charles Edward had, however, traced him from Skye, and he was now encompassed on all sides. Near Loch Nevis vessels of war were stationed, also several bodies of troops, a cordon of which was placed around the entire district, and no person was allowed to pass without being examined by sentries placed at frequent and equal distances from each other.

Having bade farewell to Augus and his wife, Charles Edward, accompanied only by Glenaladale, wended his way through mountainous passes and a rugged district, from whence, on reaching the brow of a hill, he sent a message to a chief, Cameron of Glenpean, to send him help in his direst need.

It was drawing near midnight as they descended into a deep ravine, having ascertained that a body of Argyllshire militia were approaching the hill on which they had been stationed; and it was not without a feeling of alarm that they beheld a man advancing towards them. It proved, however, to be Cameron himself, laden with a small supply of bread and butter, and that was the only food Charles Edward tasted during the next four days.

Then they wandered on again through rugged ravines and mountainous passes almost inaccessible, so choked up were they by rocks and trees, and, at length, on reaching the summit of a hill, he could perceive the enemy's camp within a mile of him; and in the silence which reigned around when night had fallen, he could hear distinctly the

challenge of the sentries, and could see the blaze of light issuing from the watch-fires, which made it evident to him that he had no greater chance of escape by night than by day.

Charles and his companions then proceeded to a hiding place on the brow of a hill, the poor Prince keeping himself concealed when those who were with him left him in search of food, but they quickly hastened back with the intelligence that a party of soldiers were drawing near. Their only hope of avoiding detection consisted in their remaining close together. They therefore concealed themselves in a cove, the entrance to which was nearly choked up with trees, whilst the soldiers searched around in vain. Desperately small as the chance of escape through the military cordon drawn around them would seem to be, to remain where they were was scarcely less so, added to which it was utterly impossible to procure provisions. Therefore they resolved to brave the worst, and made the attempt that same night.

They made their way over a steep hill, and, in consequence of his foot slipping, Charles would have been dashed to atoms by falling over a steep precipice, had not his companions caught him, one by each arm.

On reaching the summit of the hill, they crept stealthily along till within earshot of the sentinels; and as the day began to break, they crawled up a deep and narrow ravine, and watching an opportunity till the backs of the men were turned towards them, they crept on all-fours, in the deepest silence, till they found themselves out of sight of their enemies.

Then bidding farewell to one of his faithful friends, Cameron of Glenpean, Charles, as soon as night again set in, commenced his journey with Glenaladale, his brother, and a man from Glengarry, whom he had met in the hills, and whose father had been killed by the soldiers on the previous

day. Suddenly, Glenaladale discovered that he had lost the Prince's purse, containing all they possessed, about forty guineas, and, notwithstanding the objections of Charles, he went in search of it, accompanied by his friends, Charles concealing himself behind an acility till they should return.

Charles had only been a few moments concealed when the sound of many footsteps struck upon his ear, and a party of soldiers defiled along the very path by which he would have proceeded but for the loss of his purse. The loss was but temporary, too, for Glenaladale shortly returned with it. Its loss had been the means, under God, of saving the life of Charles, and they all united in returning Him hearty thanks, the Prince expressing his conviction that he was under the special care of Providence.

All that night did Charles and his companions pursue their way through glen and valley. On the following morning, seeking a hiding place for a few hours, the painful march was again resumed, but what was their surprise and horror when they heard the sound of the shots of the brutal soldiery driving away the unfortunate people who had fled to the hills with their cattle?

For many hours the rain fell in one ceaseless downpour, and neither bit nor drop had passed the lips of Charles and his companions all the day. The night had again closed in, it was still raining heavily, and the wind by fits and starts was howling in dismal gusts.

At length he reached the braes of Glenmoriston, and without food or fire, drenched to the skin, his only shelter was a cave, into which he crept. It was narrow in extent, the ground rugged and rocky, but it saved him from the pitiless storm.

CHAPTER XII.

THE SEVEN MEN OF GLENMORISTON.

GHE Seven Men of Glenmoriston were individuals proscribed by the English Government on account of their having taken up arms for the House of Stuart. These men had beheld their homes laid waste, those they loved slain, and their fellow-clansmen sent as slaves to the Plantations.

They then formed an association, binding themselves by a solemn vow to let no opportunity slip of avenging themselves on the Duke of Cumberland and his soldiers, to stand by each other, and never to yield up their arms.

They lurked in eaves by the lonely hillside, and skulked about amongst the rugged fastnesses of the wildest districts, whence they emerged to attack the military parties in the neighborhood, carrying off their cattle and other spoil.

Their daring exploits at length made them the terror of the military, four of them having on one occasion attacked a party of seven soldiers who had some wine and provisions in their custody; they shot two of them dead, and also an informer, whose head they cut off and stuck on a tree by the high road. They had also attacked and kept up a running fire in a narrow ravine on a large body of the military, headed by three officers, till the former fled, leaving their cattle behind them.

A Highlander had appeared before these men, in their own stronghold, and had craved their protection for Glenaladale and two Jacobite gentlemen, mentioning a desolate spot in the midst of the braes as that in which they might be seen. Three out of the seven at once set forth, little dreaming whom they were to meet.

Ragged, forlorn, and miserable was the condition of Charles Edward; but no sooner had he appeared before them than they recognized the Prince, and transported with delight, they led him in triumph to their cave.

For forty-eight long and weary hours he had borne a severe fast and exposure to the inclemency of the weather, and he did indeed rejoice in the warmth and comfort he met with in the robbers' stronghold, in which he was at once refreshed with a plentiful meal of mutton, butter, cheese, and whiskey.

The four men who were absent were away on a foraging expedition; they returned on the morrow, and these also recognized the Prince, and Glenaladale, at his request, administered the awful oath in use in the Highlands, "that all the curses the Scriptures did pronounce might come upon them and all their posterity if they did not stand firm to the Prince in the greatest danger, and if they should discover to any person, man, woman, or child, that the Prince was in their keeping till once his person should be out of danger."

So faithfully did they keep this oath, that not one of them mentioned the Prince had been their guest until a year after his escape to the Continent.

Three weeks did Charles abide in caves and hiding places known to the Glenmoriston men, during which time they served him with the most devoted attention, though the means they often had recourse to were odd and faulty enough.

The tattered state of his clothing shocked them, and to remedy the difficulty, they stopped on their way some servants who were going to Fort Augustus, seized a portmanteau belonging to their master, and gave its contents to the Prince.

Not long had he been with these lawless men before he obtained an influence over them. He saw the power he possessed, and turned it to a good purpose. He made Glen-

aladale his interpreter, and discovering that they were much given to the practice of swearing, reproved them so often, that they at last gave up the custom; and he also set them a powerful example for good in the exactitude with which they beheld him retire from their company morning and evening to offer up his devotions in private.

Entirely did bonny Prince Charlie win the love of the warm-hearted Highlanders. They esteemed him for the pleasure he took in athletic sports; they loved him because he made himself one of themselves and identified himself with their own interests, scorning not to become their associate; and to make them perfectly at their ease in his company, he forbade them to take off their bonnets, and during his meals made them eat with him, with their food upon their knees.

Charles ardently desired to meet with Lochiel, whom he fancied was concealing himself in the wilds of Badenoch, and when little more than a month had elapsed, he prepared to bid farewell to the Seven Men of Glenmoriston, how earnestly did those outlawed mountaineers beseech him not to leave them.

"Remain with us," they one and all exclaimed before he left them; "the mountains of gold which the Government has set as a price on your head may lead some gentleman to betray you who can live on the wages of his dishonor in a foreign land; to *us* there is no such temptation; we speak no language but our own; we cannot live in any other country; were we to touch a hair of your head, the very mountains would crush us beneath their weight."*

It was not indeed without a feeling of regret that the Prince bade them farewell, first presenting them with twenty-four guineas, to be divided amongst them.

* Chambers' Hist. Rebellion.

CHAPTER XIII.

CONDEMNED TO DEATH.



N the same day on which Charles Edward fled for shelter to the braes of Glenmoriston, Lord Balmerino was summoned to take his trial at Westminster Hall on a charge of high treason, together with the Earls of Cromartie and Kilmarnock. Lord Balmerino was the first person of rank who fell into the hands of the Government. He had been taken to Inverness after the battle of Culloden ; he was then sent by sea to London, and, with the two earls, committed to the Tower, and brought to trial before their peers on the 28th of July, 1746.

The scene is said to have been of a most impressive and solemn character.

Bills of indictment had been found against these unfortunate noblemen by the grand jury of Surrey. They were very long, and stated, amongst many other things, “that not having the fear of God in their hearts, and being moved by the instigation of the devil, they had tried to exalt the person pretending to be Prince of Wales.”

The Sergeant-at-Arms was then called to make proclamation for the Lieutenant of the Tower to bring his prisoners to the Bar, which he did in the following manner :

“ O yes, O yes, O yes, Lieutenant of the Tower, bring forth your prisoners to the Bar, together with copies of commitments, pursuant to the order of the House of Lords.”

With the axe carried before them, but the edge turned from them, Lord Balmerino and his companions were

brought to the Bar, and falling on their knees, were ordered to rise by the Lord High Steward. The copy of commitment having been read, the Clerk of the Court severally arraigned the three noblemen. Lord Balmerino's turn came the last.

"Are you guilty or not guilty of this treason, Arthur, Lord Balmerino?"

With pale but composed countenance, the prisoner replied:

"Will your Lordship be pleased to hear me? I will be very brief. I have only two or three words to say. I shall not take up your time long, my Lord."

"Your Lordship is now arraigned," said the Lord High Steward; "the indictment has been read to you; now is your time to plead."

"If I should plead guilty, there is no occasion to speak after that."

"This is not a proper time to speak of other matters. It is my duty to inform your Lordship of the rules of law, which require that you should first plead to the indictment."

"Then, my Lord, you will oblige me take up more of your time than I had intended, for I cannot plead guilty. I will not waste your time. I require to be heard, and then I will plead."

"If your Lordship has anything material to say, you may mention it."

"My Lords," said Balmerino, looking on the assembled peers, "if there be any fault in the form of indictment, or if it is so faulty that no judgment can be given upon it, I wish to know whether I can be indicted again?" Then he went on to say that he could prove he was twelve miles from Carlisle when he was indicted for being present at the taking of the city.

This objection, he was told, would depend on the evidence, which could not be entered into till he had pleaded. The question being again put to him :

" Arthur, Lord Balmerino, are you guilty or not guilty ? "

" Not guilty," he replied, in a loud voice.

" Culprit, how will your Lordship be tried ? "

" By God and my peers," replied the venerable old man.

" God send your Lordship a good deliverance," was the reply, and the Sergeant-at-Arms made proclamation :

" O yes, O yes, O yes, all manner of persons that will give evidence against Arthur, Lord Balmerino, on behalf of our sovereign lord the King, let them come forth and they shall be heard, for now he stands at the Bar upon his deliverance."

Then Sir Richard Lloyd, counsel for the King, observed that as he had pleaded " not guilty," it was incumbent on those who had the honor to serve the Crown to prove his guilt.

Poor Balmerino, true to the last to the interests for which he died, listened with a still, calm countenance to the speech of the counsel for the King, a few lines of which I transcribe for such as may not have examined the State Trials of that most unfortunate period :

" Rebellion surely is the sin of witchcraft. Our religion is a reasonable service ; its establishment is the law of the land ; and for a Protestant peer to endeavor to extirpate our most holy religion, and to introduce superstition and idolatry amongst us is a proposition as absurd as transubstantiation, &c. * * * *

" The prisoner, as a reward for his treachery, was advanced to be the captain of the second troop of life guards attending on the Pretender's son, and entered Carlisle with his sword drawn, colors displayed, and drums beat.

ing, wearing a white cockade in his hat. He was present at several places where the Pretender was proclaimed, and was finally defeated with the rest of the rebels, and made a prisoner on the field of Culloden."

Then followed a long speech of the Attorney-General, charging him with a desire to dethrone his Majesty, extirpate his royal family, and set up a Popish Pretender in his place.

Several witnesses were then examined, some of which were not very clear as to the time in the month the prisoner was at Carlisle.

At the conclusion of their examination, the Lord High Steward remarked, that though the witnesses could not swear that he was there on the day named in the indictment, yet they had proved he had been in arms at the head of a troop of rebels, and the council and judges expressing the same opinion, Balmerino was removed from the Bar, and the question was put severally to each of the assembled peers by the Lord High Steward, beginning with the youngest, as follows, saying :

"Henry Arthur, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, what says your Lordship? is Arthur, Lord Balmerino, guilty or not guilty of the high treason whereof he stands indicted?"

Amidst breathless silence, the young peer stood up in his place, his head uncovered, and laying his right hand on his breast, he answered :

"Guilty, upon my honor."

He was again summoned in the same order as before, and acquainted that he was found guilty of the crime of high treason.

On the second day he applied for benefit of counsel, which was accorded to him, he being under the belief that the flaw in the bill of indictment relative to the time he was at Carlisle would quash it so as to render it illegal.

The chief plea set up by the friends of Balmerino was, that as the bill of indictment was issued by the grand jury of Surrey, in which county no offence had been committed, that the whole thing should be set aside, or at least an arrest of judgment be granted, and this idea, being submitted to his counsel, was thought by him of no avail.

Resolved to stand by his principles to the last, and never sue for life in the suppliant terms used by his fellow-prisoners or have recourse to their own servile language, in the faint hope that the stony heart of George the Second would be touched by their appeal to his Most Sacred Majesty, he simply expressed his sorrow that he had taken up any unnecessary time, and begged his Lordship to intercede with the King.

The three peers then had sentence of death passed on them, as follows. This sentence was according to the brutal spirit of the times:

"The judgment of the law is, and this high court doth award, that you return to the prison of the Tower from whence you came; from thence you must be drawn to the place of execution; when you come there you must be hanged by the neck, but not till you are dead, for you must be cut down alive; then your bowels must be taken out and burnt before your faces; then your heads must be severed from your bodies, and your bodies must be divided into four quarters, and these must be at the King's disposal. And God Almighty be merciful to your souls."

The sentence of hanging was, as is usual, commuted to that of beheading, on account of the rank of the prisoners. The old peer had not been suffered to be much alone during those sorrowful days that intervened between his commitment to the Tower and his execution. He had been very anxious that "his pretty Peggy," as he was wont to call his heart.

broken wife, should be in the Tower with him ; but that favor being refused, she took lodgings for her niece, Marion, and herself in East Smithfield ; so that the husband and wife were constantly together during the time of his imprisonment.

Attacked by a severe illness when on his way from Lord Balmerino's home in Argyllshire, Edward St. John was incapacitated, perhaps fortunately for himself, from being at the fatal field of Culloden.

He had taken advantage of the very first days of his convalescence to repair to London, on hearing of the arrest and approaching trial of Lord Balmerino, passed the best part of his time with the prisoner, and when not so employed, was engaged in the task of soothing the anguish of Marion and her aunt.

Maintaining perfect calmness to the last, without at the same time showing any symptoms of bravado, this good peer prepared for death, his single sorrow consisting in the reflection that he had not died in his armor at Culloden, beside his friend and brother in arms, the veteran Marshal.

The 18th of August being the day appointed for the execution, at six o'clock in the morning a troop of the life guards, another of horse-grenadier guards, and a thousand foot guards, marched to Tower Hill. A large number of them were posted around the scaffold, and the remainder were drawn up in two lines, reaching from the Tower gate to the scaffold itself. At eight o'clock, the sheriff, accompanied by the under sheriffs and their officers, proceeded to the house they had hired for the reception of the prisoners on Tower Hill, and then went in procession to the outer gate of the Tower, and, according to ancient custom, knocked at the gate, the Warden asking from within :

“ Who's there ? ”

"The Sheriffs of London and Middlesex."

"What do you want?"

"The bodies of William, Earl of Kilmarnock, and Arthur, Lord Balmerino."

"I will go and inform the Lieutenant of the Tower," replied the Warden.

The same flight of stairs in the Tower led to the apartments of both these unfortunate noblemen, and on descending the staircase they encountered each other; they shook hands warmly, and for the first time, save during the agony of parting with his wife and the two young people, Lord Balmerino betrayed symptoms of emotion.

"My Lord," said he, "I am very sorry to have your company in this expedition; but I beg to ask your Lordship one question."

"Any question, my Lord, that you shall now think proper to ask, I believe I shall have no reason to decline answering."

"Why, then, my Lord, did you ever see or know of any order, signed by the Prince (meaning the Pretender's son), to give no quarter at the battle of Culloden?"

"No, my Lord."

"Nor I, either, and therefore it seems to be an accusation to justify their own murderous schemes."

"No, my Lord, I do not think that inference can be drawn from it; because, while I was a prisoner at Inverness, I was informed by several officers that there *was* such an order, signed George Murray, and that it was in the Duke's custody."

"Lord George Murray!" replied Balmerino; "why, then, they should not charge it on the Prince. But, dear Lord Kilmarnock," he added, "I am only sorry that I cannot pay all this reckoning alone. Once more, farewell for ever."

Whilst the form of delivering over the prisoners to the Sheriff was being gone through, the Deputy Lieutenant cried out, according to ancient usage, “ God bless King George ! ” to which Lord Kilmarnock assented by a bow, but Lord Balmerino exclaimed :

“ God bless King James ! ”

The procession then moved on, one of the Sheriffs walking with either peer; their two hearses and a mourning coach bringing up the rear; two Presbyterian clergymen being with Lord Kilmarnock, and the chaplain of the Tower with Lord Balmerino.



CHAPTER XIV.

IN MEMORIAM.



ARK ! that is my summons, my dear boy," said Lord Balmerino to Edward ; and his eyes grew humid and his hand trembled as he pushed back the clustering looks from the brow of his young friend and imprinted a fervent kiss on his forehead.

He was right. The ghastly scene of Kilmarnock's execution was over, the scaffold set in order for the next victim, and the entrance of the Warden was of itself a notice to him that his own time had come.

Edward was on his knees, the hand of his old friend closely locked within his own and wet with his tears, and it required a strong effort of courage on the part of Balmerino to break from him. Affection can make the bravest man weak as any woman, and can produce emotion such as torture or even death itself cannot cause.

" I suppose my Lord Kilmarnock is no more," said he to the Sheriff. " How did the executioner perform his duty ? "

" With one blow, my Lord."

" Then it was well done. And now, gentlemen, I will detain you no longer, fer I desire not to protract my life. Farewell, a last farewell, dear Edward," he said. " May you and Marion and my dear Peggy spend many happy days together." Then, cheerfully saluting all present, he drew tears from every eye but his own. Graceful without affectation, cheerful but not presumptuous, the aged peer had won the affection of all who had come in contact with him during his incarceration in the Tower.

Accepting the offer of refreshment, he took a small piece

of bread and a glass of wine ; but before swallowing the latter, he said :

“ I beg you, gentlemen, drink me ain degrae to haiven.” Then he besought God to help and succor him, and avowed his willingness to die.

“ I am ready and prepared to meet my death. Lead on, gentlemen, I beg you, lead on,” said he, and with an undaunted step he went on his rough and thorny way, and astonished those present who knew not the greatness of his soul. His noble form was arrayed in the very same regiments, blue turned up with red, which he had worn at the battle of Culloden.

He then walked round the scaffold, bowed to the assembled crowd, and paused to read the inscription on his coffin. It ran as follows : “ *Arthurus, Dominus de Balmerino, decollatus, 13 die Augusti, 1746. Aetate suae 58.* ”*

“ It is quite right,” said he, and passing to the block with a smile on his face, he looked calmly upon it, calling it his pillow of rest.

Then he drew a paper from his pocket, the contents of which he read to those immediately around him, and delivered it to the Sheriff, to do with as he should think fit; and calling for the executioner, who was about to ask his forgiveness, Lord Balmerino stopped him, saying :

“ Friend, you need not ask my forgiveness ; the execution of your duty is commendable. Here are three guineas for you,” he added, placing them in the man’s hand ; “ I never had much money, and this is all I now possess ; I wish it was more for your sake ; and I am sorry I can add nothing to it but my coat and waistcoat.”

* For account of trial and execution of Arthur, Lord Balmerino, see State Trials of 1746.

Inscription on his coffin : “ Arthur, Lord Balmerino, beheaded the 13th of August, 1746. Aged 58.”

Drawing them off as he spoke, he placed them on the coffin for the executioner.

Then, amidst a dead silence, he prepared himself for the block by putting on a flannel waistcoat that had been made for the occasion, and a plaid cap upon his head; then, going to the block, he showed the executioner what he intended to be the signal for the blow; it was to be the dropping down of his arms.

Then he turned to Edward, who had insisted on accompanying him to the scaffold, saying :

"Be calm, and comfort my dear wife and poor Marion. Remember death is but the gate of eternity."

Then glancing round on the concourse of spectators, he said :

"I fear lest there should be any who may think my behavior bold;" and turning to a gentleman near him, he added : "Remember, sir, what I tell you: it arises from a firm confidence in God and a clear conscience."

He then took the axe from the hand of the executioner, felt the edge, returned it to him again, and showed him where to strike the blow. "Have no fear, I beg you," he said. "I exhort you to do your work firmly and with a good heart," adding, "for in so doing, friend, you will show your mercy."

Then, with a glad countenance, as if bidden to a wedding feast, he knelt down at the block, and with his arms extended, he prayed aloud :

"O Lord, reward my friends, forgive my enemies, and receive my soul."

Then he gave the signal to the executioner.

Terrified at his intrepidity and the suddenness with which he had given the signal, though the executioner gave the blow in the part directed, unhappily the force was not suffi-

cient to sever the head from the body, though enough to deprive the sufferer of all sensation.

After the first blow, the head of the sufferer fell back heavily upon his shoulders, but it was not severed until two more blows had been dealt by the clumsy headsman. The head was then received by the valet of young St. John in a piece of red baize, and, with his body, afterwards deposited in his coffin and delivered to the latter for burial.

The paper given by Lord Balmerino to the Sheriff when on the scaffold ran as follows :

"I was brought up in true loyal and anti-revolution principles, and I hope the world is convineed that they stick to me to the last.

"I must aeknowledge, however, that I did a very inconsiderate thing, for which I am heartily sorry, in aeepting of a company of foot from the Princeess Anne, who I knew had no more right to the crown than her predecessor, the Prince of Orange. To make amends for what I had done, I joined the —— Pretender when he was in Scotland in 1715, and when all was over, I made my escape and lived abroad till the year 1734.

"In the beginning of that year, I got a letter from my father whieh very much surprised me. It was to let me know he had a promise of a remission for me. I did not know what to do. I was then, I think, in the Canton of Berne, and had no one to advise with, but next morning I wrote a letter to the —— Pretender, who was then in Rome, to aequaint the —— Pretender that this was done without my asking or knowledge, and that I would not aeept of it without his eonsent.

"I had in reply a letter written in the —— Pretender's own hand, allowing me to go home, and he told me his banker would give me money for any traveling charges when I came to Paris, whieh aecordingly I got.

"When the —— Pretender's son eame to Edinburgh, I joined him, though I might easily have excused myself on aeeount of my age; but I never could have had peace of conscience if I had stayed at home.

"I am at a loss when I come to speak of the —— (Pretender's son). I am not a fit hand to draw his character. I shall leave

that to others. This much only I will say: he is kind, generous, and affectionate to a fault.

"Pardon me if I say wherever I had the command I never suffered any disorder to be committed, as will appear by the Duke of Buccleuch's servants at East Park; by the Earl of Findlater's minister, Mr. Latto; and by Mr. Rose, minister at Nairn, who was pleased to favor me with a visit when I was at Inverness; by Mr. Stewart, chief servant to the Lord President, at the house of Culloden; and by several others. All this gives me great pleasure, now that I am looking upon the block, on which I am ready to lay down my head. And even had it not been my own natural inclination to protect everybody, it would have been my interest to have done it, for —— (the Pretender's son), abhorred all those who were capable of doing injustice to any one.

"I have heard, since I came to this place, that there has been a most wicked report spread, and mentioned in several of the newspapers, that the —— (Pretender's son), before the battle of Culloden, had given out orders that no quarter should be given to the enemy. This is such an unchristian thing, and so unlike the —— (Pretender's son), that nobody (the Jacobites) that know him will believe it. It is very strange that if there had been any such orders, neither the Earl of Kilmarnock, who was colonel of the regiment of foot guards, nor I, who was colonel of the second troop of life guards, should ever have heard anything of it, especially, since we were both at the headquarters the morning before the battle, and I am convinced that it is a malicious report industriously spread to injure.

"Ever since my confinement in the Tower, when Major White or Mr. Fowler did me the honor of a visit, their behavior was always so kind and obliging that I cannot find words to express it. But I am sorry I cannot say the same of General Williamson; he has treated me barbarously, but not quite so ill as he did the Bishop of Rochester; and had it not been for a worthy clergyman's advice, I should have prayed for him in the words of David, Psalm CIX, from the 6th to the 15th verse.

"I forgive him and all my enemies. I hope you will have the charity to believe that I die in peace with all men. Yesterday I received the Holy Eucharist from the hands of a clergyman of the Church of England, in whose communion I die."

CHAPTER XV.

FAREWELL TO THE HIGHLANDS.

BAREFOOTED, arrayed in an old black kilt coat, philabeg and waistcoat, a dirty shirt and a long red beard, a gun in his hand, a pistol and dirk by his side—such was Prince Charles Edward Stuart when joined by his friends Maedonald and Cameron, fugitives like himself. The three took up their joint residence in a small hut amidst the mountains, and from thence he sent a messenger to his beloved Lochiel, begging him to join them.

Lochiel having heard that the Prince had escaped from Skye, sent his two brothers in search of him, and after wandering about apart for some time, they at last fell in with each other again, and were so fortunate as to meet with Cameron, who took them at once to the Prince.

Notwithstanding the great hardships Charles had endured, and the destitute appearance he presented, they found him in good health and spirits. Some of Cameron's retainers were busily employed roasting a cow which had been killed on the previous day, and from which he afterwards made a hearty meal.

During several days he had taken refuge in a wood, sometimes concealing himself in one of the huts, and then again removing to another.

Altogether, the Prince's party now numbered eight persons, and their quiet was suddenly disturbed by Cameron ascertaining that a body of military were on the lookout in the immediate neighborhood. He had resolved, as well as his friends, to sell his life as dearly as possible if caught.

"There is nothing to be done but at once to leave the wood," said the Prince, and accordingly, they departed under cover of its friendly shade, and reached the top of a neighboring hill, and from thence toiled wearily up a rugged and eraggy mountain path. Wounded repeatedly by the jutting rocks and stunted trees with which he and his party came in contact, the Prince, who had fasted the whole day, suddenly gave way, exclaiming, "I can proceed no further, I am faint and exhausted."

"Try, your Highness, if you can by any possibility continue, if supported," said Cameron; and signing to two sturdy Highlanders, they came forwards and tendered their support, one on either side of him; and onwards he tottered for full another mile, and was at length cheered by beholding in the distance a couple of well known friends, busily engaged in cooking by a cheerful fire a portion of a cow which was intended for supper.

But he might not tarry long; he must still proceed on his onward course. Could he but reach Badenoeh he should see his beloved friend Lochiel. Thither he accordingly directed his steps, and when nearing the end of his journey, beheld him advancing to meet him. The chieftain at once prepared to do him homage on his knees, when Charles exclaimed:

"My dear Lochiel, forbear! how do you know who may be perched on the tops of yonder trees? If there be anyone there, they will be sure from such actions that I am he whom they seek so anxiously, and we may apprehend very quickly what the consequences may be."

"Allow me, then, to introduce your Royal Highness to my hovel," replied Lochiel, leading the way; and on entering the hut, for it was no better, the Prince was speedily entertained at an excellent dinner, consisting of minced col-

lops and sundry other luxuries. He was in excellent spirits and well pleased with his fare, and during the few days that he dwelt with Lochiel, often made the chieftain smile by protesting that "now he lived like a prince."

Still continuing his onward course, on bidding farewell to Lochiel, he traveled on to the heart of a wild and desolate district, in which he remained till the happy day on which he made good his escape to France.

It may readily be conjectured that the old Chevalier had felt the deepest anxiety and grief concerning the fate of his son. He had caused two vessels to be fitted out, and had deputed a certain Colonel Warren to seek for and carry off the Prince. Glenaladale selected Cameron as the person through whom all communications should be made, and at last the long delayed hopes of the unfortunate Charles Edward were realized.

A misty morning, preceded by a heavy dew which had fallen since daybreak, concealed from the eyes of Charles, till he neared the coast, the vessel which was destined to bear him far from the persecutions of his foes; and the poor Prince was overwhelmed with joy when, the haze suddenly carried away by the beams of the rising sun, he beheld the masts of two vessels in the distance.

"*Hope deferred maketh the heart sick, but when the desire cometh it is as the tree of life.*" All his past sufferings were forgotten in the joy that filled his heart as he returned thanks to God for his many miraculous escapes.

But the generosity of his character prevailed over fear of danger to himself; for even at this, the eleventh hour, he had a sharp contest with his friends for persisting in increasing the terrible risk of lingering nearly two days on the coast, in order that if any of those who had followed his fortunes were lurking about the neighborhood they also might be afforded a chance of escape.

At last the moment came when Charles Edward Stuart was for ever to bid farewell to the land where his forefathers had reigned. Twenty-three gentlemen and one hundred and seven men of the humble class embarked on board these two vessels, and some amongst them shed tears, so great was their love of the country they were leaving forever.

Can I do better, now that we are about taking leave of the unfortunate and dispossessed heir of three kingdoms, than quote to you the words of Lord Mahon, as used by Mr. Jesse in his History of the Rebellion?

“ He went, but not with him departed his remembrance from the Highlanders.

“ For years and years did his name continue enshrined in their hearts and familiar to their tongues; their plaintive ditties resounding with his exploits and inviting his return. Again, in these strains, do they declare themselves ready to risk life and fortune for his cause, and maternal fondness—the strongest, perhaps, of all human feelings—yields to the passionate devotion to Prince Charlie.”



CHAPTER XVI.

FLORENCE COURT.



T is the month of December, 1752. The day is perfectly calm, the sky a bright azure, unflecked by a single cloud.

A vessel of somewhat large dimensions, well manned, and with many passengers on board, is entering the basin formed by the shores of Point Levi and the island of Orleans, and a full view of Quebec and the surrounding country is exposed to view, displaying at once all that nature can present that is grand and beautiful.

Yonder is an immense projecting rock covered with houses and cottages and churches, built of a fine grey stone, rising gradually one above the other in the form of an amphitheatre. Above, the glittering domes of convents and cathedrals; below, the shipping, the masts sinking into insignificance compared with the mountain which towers above them.

Beyond is the majestic chasm of Montmorency, with its snow-white falls, visible upon the elevated shores of Beauport, rising terrace above terrace till they reach the lofty mountains that form the background, extending far beyond the scan of mortal vision.

But the vessel has cast anchor and a motley assemblage of French Canadians and English settlers are gathered together on the shore, eagerly scanning the countenances of those who crowd the deck in hopes of recognizing amongst the passengers some dearly loved friend from the old country.

An English lady, of middle age, dressed in deep mourning, and with a sad expression on her handsome features, stands a little apart from the eager crowd, leaning over the edge of the vessel and looking anxiously towards the shore.

At last a smile lights up her features as she observes a gentleman, in the prime of life, leap from a handsome and well-appointed cariole, throw the reins to a servant and then hand out a lady.

The gentleman was enveloped in a thick Bath great-coat, fastened around his waist with a sash. He wore a fur cap, fashioned in the helmet style, and Shetland hose outside his boots. The lady was attired in a velvet pelisse, lined and trimmed with sables; also a fur cap and Shetland hose; and drawing her arm within his own, he led her towards the shore.

See! these two have recognized the lonely lady on the deck and she, too, sees her friends and waves her handkerchief in token of recognition.

A few moments time and the group of people made way for them to pass, and stepping from the deck, the ladies meet in a hearty embrace, in spite of the assembled crowd.

Then these three persons ascended the cariole, a buffalo robe was drawn carefully over the new-comer, and they started off at a quick pace, the bells jingling on the harness of the horses as they wended their way to a pretty suburb some three or four miles out of the city.

At length the cariole stopped at the gates of a handsome stone residence, situated in the midst of a flourishing plantation, on the borders of a steep bank overlooking the St. Lawrence. A long avenue led to the house, bordered on either side by the maple and beech, the white oak and chesnut.

And now the young people, husband and wife they are, descend from the cariole, and the gentleman assists the weary traveler to alight, and a handsome man of military bearing, on whose arm leans a tall and delicate woman, hastens forward to welcome her.

Do you not guess who these people are who have sought, and have at length found, REST in a far away Canadian home?

The elder couple are Maurice and Isabel St. John; the younger are Edward and Marion, and the lady with the sad, pretty face is the stricken widow of Lord Balmerino, who, lone and solitary in the old country, at last yielded to the solicitations of her niece, and has come to end her days at Florence Court.

And the voices of prattling children are heard, and four blooming little ones bound forward. The eldest boy is named Reginald, after the good Marshal; the eldest girl, Florence, after his wife; and the youngest, Isabel; these are the children of the Colonel. The youngest boy, the son of Marion and Edward, bears the name of Charles Edward, after that most unfortunate of Princes.

The Lady Florence had died tranquilly in the arms of her adopted daughter, shortly after the Sœur Madeleine had raised the veil which had screened the past from the Lady's knowledge; she died happily unconscious of the death of the Marshal, or of the fatal termination to the last effort of the devoted adherents of Prince Charles Edward.

Isabel was still too ill to leave the Convent, and the Sœur Madeleine was the principal mourner at the funeral of the Lady Florence. A few days later she returned to her Convent, having first taken from a cabinet a letter which the deceased Lady had written a few days before her death, requesting that, after that event, she would send it to Isabel. A copy of the same she had herself placed in the hands of the aged Curé of St. Germains, to be delivered to the Marshal when the chances of war should allow of his return to his home.

These packets contained the confession of Margaret,

together with the will of Lady Florence, in that which was set aside for her husband. It was opened by Maurice some three months later, when he at last returned to the now lonely chateau in the valley.

It had been the earnest wish of Isabel to see and converse with the Soeur Madeleine, over the history of whose repentance she had shed many tears, but the latter had been selected by the Superior of her Convent in order to found a branch house of her admirable Order in a distant part of France.

The long deferred nuptials of Maurice and Isabel were celebrated with an utter absence of festivity and rejoicing, on account of the recent deaths of the Marshal and his Lady. They were married from the hotel of the Baron de Breteuil, the nearest male relative of the Colonel St. John.

More than ten years had they been separated from each other, and as the old paternal home was fraught only with painful recollections of the past, the Colonel and his brother resolved to dispose of the property, and as some of his late mother's relatives had been settled for some time in Canada, he, too, decided on there building up a new home. After the execution of Lord Balmerino, Edward and his bride Marion immediately joined the Colonel and his wife.

The property which the Lady Florence had inherited from her uncle was at last confiscated to the Government. Her Irish estates she had fortunately sold, some years previous to the last Jacobite rising in favor of Charles Stuart, and with the proceeds had bought a large property in France. This was divided between the two brothers, who became joint proprietors of a rich plantation in Quebec, which, in honor of Lady Florence, they called by the name of Florence Court.

Nor had Maurice and Isabel been unmindful of two faithful servants who had steadily fulfilled their duty, for Denis

and his wife, Isabel's foster-mother, accompanied them to Quebec.

Shortly after having taken possession of her Canadian home, not unmindful of the foster-sister, the narration of whose history of the last ten years Isabel had read with such emotion, for it was not without difficulty she could at first credit that proud Margaret and the humble Sœur Madeleine were one and the same person, she at once wrote to her, tenderly shrinking from one word of recurrence to the past, but in her own heart of hearts adoring the unspeakable mercy of God who had softened the hard, ambitious spirit, and, purifying it from all earthly dross, had filled it with humility and love. She congratulated the Sister on the joy she must have felt on having the sweet consolation of closing the eyes of her former protectress, and lamented her own absence in that supreme hour; and ever after they kept up at stated intervals a regular and affectionate correspondence with each other.

This Sœur Madeleine, when in advanced age, played a conspicuous part in the stormy epoch of the French Revolution, and as the history of Isabel, the youngest daughter of Maurice St. John, was worked up with the latter days of her own life, it may, perhaps, form subject matter for a Tale of the Reign of Terror.

Lady Balmerino, still wearing the sable garb of a widow, as a poor outward signification of the grief that dieth not, had just arrived in time to celebrate the Christmas festivities at the Florence Court plantation.

* * * * *

It was the eve of that great festival. The night was fine, the clear, blue sky glittering with myriads of stars. The inmates of Florence Court had just returned in a covered carriage from the midnight Mass in the adjacent Church

of Notre Dame des Victoires, and they stood for a few moments beneath the portico, though all around was a cold, white waste of frozen snow, watching the red and playful light of the Aurora Borealis, so often seen in Canadian winters. Insensibly, the minds of all wandered to other lands, to scenes of war and bloodshed, of anarchy and strife. Then turned they back to the light and warmth of the interior of that happy home. The thoughts of all had indeed played truant, and a deep sigh from Lady Balmerino had at once broken the momentary spell.

"We have all been looking back, I fear, dearest Lady Balmerino," said Isabel, on regaining the bright, cheery apartment; "let us, however, strive to think of those terrible years which have for ever passed with a hastened sorrow, mourning our lost ones, not as dead, but sleeping, and thanking God fervently that He has brought us out of much tribulation into a haven of rest."

And as she spoke these words, the silence of the night was broken by the sound of melodious voices carolling forth a message of peace and good will, and out of the narrow sphere of their own cares and sorrows were they borne in spirit even to the stable of Bethlehem, to the Divine Child and His Virgin Mother.

And as the last strains died away on the midnight air, the happy emigrants felt that *to them* and in their *own persons* was indeed realized the promise of Peace on earth to Men of Good Will.

[THE END.]

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